

---

# Contents

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| Acknowledgements .....   | xi       |
| <b>1. Introduction.....</b>  | <b>1</b> |
| <b>2. The structure of meaning and the process of concept formation.....</b>                 | <b>4</b> |
| 2.1 Introduction .....   | 4        |
| 2.2 Concept formation on the experiential level.....   | 5        |
| 2.3 Linguistic example of concept formation .....  | 9        |
| 2.4 General meaning and context-dependent meaning .....                                      | 19       |
| 2.5 Case study: The meaning of <i>open</i> .....   | 24       |
| 2.5.1 Case 1: Path through Y to contents of Y .....  | 24       |
| 2.5.2 Case 2: Path to Y (by removing barrier) .....  | 26       |
| 2.5.3 Case 3: Path through Y (to Z) or removing Y.....                                       | 28       |
| 2.5.4 Case 4: Metonymy .....   | 29       |
| 2.5.5 Case 5: Abstract cases .....   | 30       |
| 2.5.6 Case 6: Marking of the beginning of phenomenon Y.....                                  | 32       |
| 2.5.7 Conclusion: The meaning of <i>open</i> .....   | 34       |
| 2.6 Further arguments for and against general meanings.....                                  | 37       |
| 2.6.1 Lack of empirical success and psychological evidence .....                             | 38       |
| 2.6.2 Meanings are not definitions .....   | 41       |
| 2.6.3 The existence of usage types .....   | 44       |
| 2.6.4 General meanings abstract from features that play a part in<br>meaning extension ..... | 47       |
| 2.6.5 Metaphor and metonymy.....   | 47       |
| 2.7 Conclusion.....  | 52       |

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>3. The Russian imperative.....</b>  | <b>55</b> |
| 3.1 Introduction .....   | 55        |
| 3.2 The directive use of the Russian imperative.....   | 74        |
| 3.2.1 Introduction .....   | 74        |
| 3.2.2 The meaning of the directive imperative .....  | 75        |
| 3.2.2.1 Controllability .....  | 77        |
| 3.2.2.2 Impulse to realize or impulse to keep on realizing.....  | 80        |
| 3.2.2.3 Speaker commitment.....  | 82        |
| 3.2.2.4 The notion of 'directivity' and oppositional forms .....                                       | 85        |
| 3.2.3 Semantic-syntactic features .....  | 87        |
| 3.2.3.1 Aspect .....   | 88        |
| 3.2.3.2 Valency structure, subjecthood and word order.....   | 88        |
| 3.2.3.3 Negation.....  | 94        |
| 3.2.3.4 The clitic <i>-ka</i> .....  | 95        |
| 3.2.3.5 Complement.....  | 97        |
| 3.2.4 Derived uses .....   | 97        |
| 3.2.4.1 Conditional-concessive use .....   | 99        |
| 3.2.4.2 Use of reinforcement .....   | 107       |
| 3.2.4.3 'Non-future' use .....   | 108       |
| 3.2.4.4 Uses with a generic agent: Borderline cases between<br>directive use and necessitive use ..... | 109       |
| 3.2.5 Conclusion .....   | 113       |
| 3.3 Necessitive use of the imperative .....  | 114       |
| 3.3.1 Introduction .....   | 114       |
| 3.3.2 The meaning of the necessitive imperative .....  | 115       |
| 3.3.3 Semantic-syntactic features.....   | 118       |
| 3.3.3.1 Aspect .....   | 118       |
| 3.3.3.2 Tense.....   | 120       |
| 3.3.3.3 Subject .....  | 121       |
| 3.3.3.4 Lack of directive features.....  | 123       |
| 3.3.3.5 Word order .....   | 124       |
| 3.3.4 The necessitive imperative use and other imperative use.....                                     | 125       |
| 3.3.5 Subjective modal features.....   | 131       |
| 3.3.6 Conclusion .....   | 133       |
| 3.4 Narrative use of the imperative .....  | 134       |

Contents

|         |   |     |
|---------|---|-----|
| 3.4.1   | Introduction.....   | 134 |
| 3.4.2   | The meaning of the narrative imperative.....                        | 134 |
| 3.4.3   | Semantic-syntactic features.....                                    | 138 |
| 3.4.3.1 | Aspect.....   | 138 |
| 3.4.3.2 | Subject.....  | 139 |
| 3.4.3.3 | Co-occurrence of other forms.....                                   | 140 |
| 3.4.3.4 | Absence of directive features.....                                  | 142 |
| 3.4.3.5 | Word order.....   | 142 |
| 3.4.4   | The narrative imperative and other imperative use.....              | 142 |
| 3.4.5   | The <i>vʒjatʹ</i> -construction.....                                | 149 |
| 3.4.6   | Conclusion.....   | 161 |
| 3.5     | Optative use of the imperative.....                                 | 162 |
| 3.5.1   | Introduction.....   | 162 |
| 3.5.2   | The meaning of the optative imperative.....                         | 162 |
| 3.5.3   | Semantic-syntactic features.....                                    | 166 |
| 3.5.3.1 | Aspect.....   | 166 |
| 3.5.3.2 | Subject.....  | 166 |
| 3.5.3.3 | Word order.....   | 168 |
| 3.5.3.4 | Presence of <i>-ka</i> .....  | 171 |
| 3.5.3.5 | The particle <i>by</i> .....  | 171 |
| 3.5.3.6 | Idiomacity.....   | 174 |
| 3.5.4   | Conclusion.....   | 174 |
| 3.6     | Conditional use of the imperative.....                              | 175 |
| 3.6.1   | Introduction.....   | 175 |
| 3.6.2   | The meaning of the conditional imperative.....                      | 175 |
| 3.6.3   | Semantic-syntactic features.....                                    | 179 |
| 3.6.3.1 | Aspect.....   | 179 |
| 3.6.3.2 | Subject.....  | 180 |
| 3.6.3.3 | Word order.....   | 181 |
| 3.6.3.4 | Absence and presence of directive-hortative features.....           | 186 |
| 3.6.3.5 | Sentence structure.....   | 186 |
| 3.6.3.6 | Particle <i>by</i> .....  | 188 |
| 3.6.3.7 | Lexical meaning of the imperative verbs.....                        | 189 |
| 3.6.4   | The conditional imperative and the other imperative uses.....       | 190 |
| 3.6.5   | Subjective modal interpretations of the conditional imperative..... | 196 |
| 3.6.5.1 | Character of unexpectedness.....                                    | 198 |

|           |  |            |
|-----------|--|------------|
| 3.6.5.2   | Character of restriction/ immediate implication .....                        | 200        |
| 3.6.5.3   | Character of concession.....   | 203        |
| 3.6.6     | Conclusion .....   | 206        |
| 3.7       | Concessive use of the imperative.....  | 206        |
| 3.7.1     | Introduction.....  | 206        |
| 3.7.2     | The meaning of the concessive imperative construction with <i>∞ot'</i> ...   | 207        |
| 3.7.3     | Semantic-syntactic features of the concessive use with <i>∞ot'</i> .....     | 210        |
| 3.7.3.1   | Aspect.....  | 211        |
| 3.7.3.2   | Subject .....  | 211        |
| 3.7.3.3   | Word order.....  | 212        |
| 3.7.3.4   | Occurrence of <i>-te</i> .....   | 212        |
| 3.7.3.5   | Sentence structure.....  | 212        |
| 3.7.3.6   | Occurrence of embedded cases .....   | 213        |
| 3.7.4     | The meaning of the concessive imperative construction with <i>ni</i> .....   | 213        |
| 3.7.5     | Semantic-syntactic features of the universal concessive use with <i>ni</i>   | 215        |
| 3.7.5.1   | Aspect.....  | 216        |
| 3.7.5.2   | Subject .....  | 216        |
| 3.7.5.3   | Word order.....  | 218        |
| 3.7.5.4   | Occurrence of the suffix <i>-te</i> .....                                    | 218        |
| 3.7.5.5   | Sentence structure.....  | 218        |
| 3.7.5.6   | Occurrence of embedded cases .....   | 220        |
| 3.7.6     | The concessive imperative construction and the other imperative uses         | 220        |
| 3.7.7     | Conclusion .....   | 225        |
| 3.8.      | Conclusion and further remarks .....   | 225        |
| <b>4.</b> | <b>Meaning and interpretation of the dative-infinitive construction.....</b> | <b>236</b> |
| 4.1       | Introduction .....   | 236        |
| 4.2       | Method .....   | 245        |
| 4.3       | The dative .....   | 255        |
| 4.3.1     | Functions and meaning of the dative .....                                    | 255        |
| 4.3.2     | The dative as a so-called 'subject' .....                                    | 263        |
| 4.4       | The infinitive .....   | 267        |
| 4.4.1     | Situation type.....  | 268        |
| 4.4.2     | Infinitives versus nominalizations.....                                      | 273        |
| 4.4.3     | Complement-specification or predicate.....                                   | 278        |
| 4.4.4     | Overview and classification of the infinitive.....                           | 282        |

Contents

|          |  |     |
|----------|--|-----|
| 4.4.4.1  | The infinitive as a complement of a finite predicate.....  | 283 |
| 4.4.4.2  | The infinitive as goal specification of a finite predicate .....   | 284 |
| 4.4.4.3  | The infinitive occurring with adverbial or adjectival predicates   | 284 |
| 4.4.4.4  | The infinitive occurring with nouns.....   | 287 |
| 4.4.4.5  | Infinitives as predicates.....   | 288 |
| 4.5      | The verb <i>byt</i> ('be').....  | 296 |
| 4.5.1    | Impersonal use .....   | 297 |
| 4.5.2    | The auxiliary status of <i>byt'</i> .....  | 298 |
| 4.6      | Meaning and syntactic structure of the DI-construction.....  | 313 |
| 4.6.1    | The abstract meaning.....  | 313 |
| 4.6.2    | The modal nature of the DI-construction.....   | 319 |
| 4.7      | On the interpretation of the DI-construction.....  | 323 |
| 4.8      | Usage types and classification of the DI-construction .....  | 332 |
| 4.9      | Necessity and absence of necessity: Cases of imposing.....   | 338 |
| 4.9.1    | Deontic-ontic necessity .....  | 341 |
| 4.9.2    | Epistemic-ontic necessity.....   | 365 |
| 4.9.3    | The construction with <i>zhe</i> , negation and imperfective infinitives:<br>In-between imposing and blocking..... | 376 |
| 4.9.4    | Sentences with imperfective infinitives that express the idea of<br>'being capable of' .....                       | 378 |
| 4.10     | 'Impossibility' and 'possibility': Cases of blocking and deblocking .....  | 379 |
| 4.10.1   | 'Impossibility' and related cases .....  | 379 |
| 4.10.2   | 'Possibility' and related cases .....  | 389 |
| 4.10.2.1 | Perfective infinitives in a contrastive context.....   | 392 |
| 4.10.2.2 | Sentences with <i>tol'ko</i> .....   | 393 |
| 4.10.2.3 | Sentences with <i>xot'</i> .....   | 397 |
| 4.10.2.4 | Sentences with a possibility interpretation and interrogatives   | 401 |
| 4.10.2.5 | Sentences with a possibility interpretation and <i>chtoby</i> .....  | 401 |
| 4.10.2.6 | Sentences without a dative subject that express possibility  | 402 |
| 4.11     | The DI-construction with the subordinators <i>pered tem</i> , <i>kak</i> , <i>chtoby</i> , and <i>esli</i>         | 409 |
| 4.11.1   | The DI-construction with <i>pered tem</i> , <i>kak</i> ('before').....   | 410 |
| 4.11.2   | The DI-construction with <i>chtoby</i> ('(in order) to').....  | 413 |
| 4.11.3   | The DI-construction with <i>esli</i> ('if').....   | 417 |
| 4.12     | Optative sentences without <i>by</i> or <i>tol'ko</i> .....  | 420 |
| 4.13     | The DI-construction with <i>by</i> .....   | 422 |
| 4.13.1   | Type I: Sentences where the external force is 'the way things go'....  | 423 |

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| 4.13.2 Type II Sentences where the external force is the speaker .....  | 425        |
| 4.13.3 Type III: Sentences with <i>tol'ko</i> or <i>vse</i> where the external force<br>is the dative participant ..... | 438        |
| 4.14 Directive infinitive use .....   | 441        |
| 4.15 Interrogatives without interrogative adverbs and pronouns .....  | 449        |
| 4.16 Related constructions .....  | 452        |
| 4.16.1 Sentences with a quantificational modification ( <i>dolgo</i> ).....   | 452        |
| 4.16.2 The existential construction .....   | 456        |
| 4.16.3 Infinitives + dative as complements to nouns or predicates.....  | 464        |
| 4.17 The second dative .....  | 471        |
| 4.17.1 Introduction .....   | 471        |
| 4.17.2 Motivation for the second dative in formal frameworks .....  | 483        |
| 4.17.3 Semantic motivation for the second dative.....   | 488        |
| 4.17.3.1 Objective infinitives and subjective infinitives.....  | 488        |
| 4.17.3.2 Passives and modal infinitives .....   | 490        |
| 4.17.3.3 Infinitive with subordinators .....  | 491        |
| 4.17.3.4 Infinitive specifications to nouns and predicates .....  | 492        |
| 4.17.3.5 Complement-Specification to an adverbial predicate .....   | 495        |
| 4.17.3.6 Complement.....  | 496        |
| 4.17.4 Concluding remarks.....  | 496        |
| 4.18 Conclusion and further remarks .....   | 498        |
| <b>5. Conclusion</b> .....  | <b>501</b> |
| <b>References</b> .....   | <b>505</b> |
| <b>Samenvatting</b> .....   | <b>516</b> |
| <b>Abstract</b> .....   | <b>520</b> |

---

## Acknowledgments

I would like to express my gratitude to a number of people that all have contributed to the writing and completion of my dissertation.

I would like to thank Prof. Dr Jadranka Gvozdanović for suggesting to write a dissertation in the first place, and for formulating the research project that led to this dissertation.

My dissertation would not have been finished, were it not for my adviser Prof. Dr Renate Bartsch; I thank her for all her valuable comments and support. I think Renate is a great adviser; she has always kept a perfect balance between guiding me and giving me enough freedom.

I thank Dr Adrie Barentsen for his help, especially for allowing me to use his corpus, his willingness to read several versions of the manuscript – always with a keen eye for detail – and his editorial help. Adrie Barentsen's help was crucial in many respects.

I would also like to express my gratitude to my co-promotor Prof. Dr Henk Haverkate, to Prof. Dr Kees Hengeveld, Dr Nel Keijsper, Prof. Dr Ron Langacker (UC San Diego), Dr Henk Proeme, Prof. Dr Eve Sweetser (UC Berkeley) and Prof. Dr Alan Timberlake (UC Berkeley) for reading my manuscripts, commenting on them, and pointing out interesting examples, as well as to the other members of the dissertation committee, Prof. Dr Frits Kortlandt, Prof. Dr Arie Verhagen, and Prof. Dr Theo Janssen, for taking the time to read the manuscript and their last-minute editorial help.

Marco Last has been a great help to me in the final editing of the text, and I also enjoyed the numerous discussions that we had on different linguistic topics.

*Acknowledgements*

Unfortunately, we always agreed! I would also like to mention Janet Taylor, who carefully checked my English.

Ten slotte dank ik mijn ouders, familie en mijn vrienden, in het bijzonder mijn paranimphen Mireille Snels en Wilrik Thomas, voor hun hulp en aanwezigheid, ook als die niet rechtstreeks met mijn dissertatie te maken had. Zonder hen zou ik het zeker niet voor elkaar gekregen hebben.

Amsterdam,  
December 2000

Egbert L.J. Fortuin

## CHAPTER I

---

### Introduction

In the literature there has been much debate concerning the question whether forms are principally monosemous or polysemous; however, many of the studies are highly theoretical, and do not support their empirical claims with extensive analyses of specific empirical data. The focus on the theoretical aspect of the phenomenon of meaning leads, in some cases, to particular shortcomings. Monosemous approaches frequently leave the process of interpretation of abstract meanings unexplained, and in many cases definitions of meanings are so abstract that they also describe oppositional forms. In polysemous analyses, however, the criteria for distinguishing different uses are not always clear, and intermediate uses are often not accounted for. Moreover, polysemous analyses often fail to point at the shared features of different interrelated uses, which may stand in opposition to other forms.

My aim is to provide further insight into the phenomenon of polysemy and monosemy by giving a detailed analysis of the interaction between meaning and context against the background of the semantic system in which the forms occur. The expressions that I will analyze are the imperative and the dative-infinitive (DI) construction in modern Russian. I have chosen to analyze the Russian imperative and the Russian dative-infinitive construction because in the literature different uses are distinguished for these expressions, while the question of how these uses are related is rarely addressed, or at least not put forward as the main question. The choice of these two expressions is further motivated by their shared 'modal' semantics; that is, both forms express such notions as necessity, wish, etc. It should be noted, however, that these expressions also differ in important aspects, since the modality of the Russian imperative is expressed by one form, whereas the dative-infinitive construction consists

of two forms, namely the dative and the infinitive, that together express modal notions such as necessity, wish, etc. I will therefore treat the combination of the dative and the infinitive as a construction, but I will focus on the meaning of the imperative in abstraction from the construction in which it occurs (subject-predicate construction, universal concessive construction, etc.).

I would like to emphasize that the main aim of the study is not primarily to present new empirical data from Russian: the Russian imperative and the Russian modal infinitive construction have been thoroughly studied by many authors, and it seems unlikely that many new facts about the use of these forms will be found. It is, rather, the analysis of the relation between these uses that is my main concern. In particular, I will address the question of how the array of uses of these expressions are structured, and I will try to motivate the interpretation of these forms. The framework used in my analysis is the functional-cognitive framework, especially as provided by Bartsch (1998).

The book has the following structure. In Chapter II, I will discuss the structure of meaning in general. The aim of this section is to provide a background to my research and to underline the theoretical framework that I have chosen to work with. In Chapter III, I will give my analysis of the Russian imperative. In Chapter IV, I will discuss the dative-infinitive construction. In Chapter V, I will give a short conclusion and make some further remarks.

Finally, I would like to make a brief comment on the Russian data used in my analysis. Three types of Russian data are used in this book, viz. (i) data taken from the linguistic literature, (ii) data taken from original sources (books, internet, corpus), and (iii) data proposed by myself and checked by native speakers. In all cases I have indicated the source of the data; the period, style and register of the examples are mentioned where relevant. In the case of data from the linguistic literature, I have indicated the original source of the data, since this is relevant for determining period and style. The format for such references is the following: (author of the cited extract, year: page/ original source of the cited extract).

I have translated the Russian sentences into English. The purpose of the translation is primarily to give a general idea of how the sentences should be interpreted for those readers who do not have a command of Russian; I am aware that occasionally the translations may not be fully adequate according to more strict literary norms of translation. In all cases I have provided the Russian sentences with glosses. The purpose of these glosses is to indicate the *relevant* grammatical structure of the sentences; grammatical information that is not relevant for the discussion at stake is not given. For the glosses I have used the following abbreviations:

*Introduction*

|        |   |                        |
|--------|---|------------------------|
| ACC    | = | accusative             |
| ADV    | = | adverb                 |
| AGR    | = | agreement              |
| ADJ    | = | adjective              |
| DAT    | = | dative                 |
| FEM    | = | feminine               |
| FUT    | = | future                 |
| GEN    | = | genitive               |
| IMP    | = | imperative             |
| IMPER  | = | imperfective           |
| IMPERS | = | impersonal             |
| INF    | = | infinitive             |
| INSTR  | = | instrumental           |
| IRR    | = | irrealis ( <i>by</i> ) |
| MASC   | = | masculine              |
| NEUT   | = | neuter                 |
| NOM    | = | nominative             |
| PART   | = | participle             |
| PAST   | = | past                   |
| PERF   | = | perfective             |
| PL     | = | plural                 |
| PRES   | = | present                |
| PRT    | = | particle               |
| REFL   | = | reflexive              |
| SG     | = | singular               |

Due to technical reasons I have represented ‘č’ with ‘ch’, ‘š’ with ‘sh’, etc.

## CHAPTER II

---

# The structure of meaning and the process of concept formation

### 2.1 Introduction

The main part of this dissertation consists of two data analyses, viz. analysis of the meaning of the Russian imperative and the meaning of the Russian dative-infinitive construction. The general aim of these analyses is to show how the association of form with meaning operates with these expressions. In order to give a picture of the various issues connected with this general theoretical theme, and to present the theoretical framework that I will use in my analyses, in this chapter I will discuss some issues related to meaning and conceptualization. This chapter is therefore primarily intended to provide a theoretical background for my analyses.

Traditionally concepts are conceived as mental representations or as reconstructions of properties, relationships, regularities, and contiguities in the world, experienced or stated in theories. In language, concepts, or *meanings*, are associated with forms, and serve as intersubjective concepts for communication. Our understanding of meaning and concepts in general may be greatly assisted by investigating the way in which we learn concepts, that is the process of concept formation. In this book I will proceed from the theory of concept formation described by Bartsch (1998) for the analyses of the linguistic data. This theory can be seen as a logico-philosophical theory of concept formation. The theory is foremost developed by trying to give an answer to the question: 'How can we gain insight in the structure of concepts by reconstructing the way in which they are learned?' Rather than looking for empirical evidence concerning how this process might proceed, Bartsch provides a logical philosophical basis for a theory of concept formation based on the available empirical evidence. The model that

she provides may be seen as a formalization and extension of the work on concept-formation of the Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1986 [1934]), and it also uses insights developed in structuralist approaches to language (e.g. Jakobson, 1960), such as the notions opposition, contrast, similarity, identity, and contiguity.

The basic idea of the theory of concept formation described by Bartsch is that the formation of concepts consists in establishing dynamic set-theoretic structures and contiguity structures on growing sets of data, whereby the sets of data are internally held together by similarity and contiguity relationships established between them. Concept formation can be seen as the structuring of sets of data by ordering relationships based on judgments of similarity (identity) and difference (especially opposition or contrast) under perspectives (points of view under which similarity is measured). In her analysis, Bartsch distinguishes between experiential (quasi-)concepts and theoretical concepts. Experiential concepts are concepts constituted on the basis of sets of experiential data. With a growing amount of data, and restricted by language use, they converge toward socially accepted experiential concepts. Theoretical concepts, and formal concepts based on these, are explicated on the level of linguistic representation of knowledge. I will now very briefly discuss the properties of concept formation, especially that of concept formation on the experiential level, which are relevant for my study. For a detailed analysis of concept formation I would refer the reader to Bartsch (1998).

## **2.2 Concept formation on the experiential level**

In this section I will briefly discuss and summarize the process of concept formation described by Bartsch (1998). This description of concept formation is rather abstract in nature; in section 2.3. I will illustrate the process of concept formation by discussing a specific example, viz. the verb *eat*.

The process of concept-formation of a word can be described in a quasi-formal way as follows. If there is an expression  $e$  and we construct the concept or concepts that are associated with this expression, we have:

- (i) experiences of utterances  $u_e$
- (ii) experiences of satisfaction situations, or experienced satisfaction situations  $s_e$ ; a satisfaction situation is that situation which satisfies the use of a word or sentence

- (iii) a perspective **P**, selected by a constraining contextual factor of an utterance, or the point of view under which the extension of a certain subset  $S$  of pairs  $\langle u, s \rangle$  of utterances and satisfaction situations is constrained; similarity is measured under a perspective, that is, two things are judged to be similar under a particular perspective, or in a particular respect

Similarity sets of experienced satisfaction situations of expression  $e$  under perspective **P** are formed: sets in which each element is similar to all others, and where there are no elements outside this set (in the considered collection of data) which are similar (to the same degree) to all its elements under this perspective.<sup>1</sup> Put differently: a perspective **P** selects a subset  $S_{e,i}$  of  $S_e$ , namely the set with those members that are seen under this perspective. Such a subset is called a **P**-harmonized set of data. A **P**-harmonised sequence  $\sum$  of  $e$  grows monotonously by adding only satisfaction situations of  $e$  that conform to harmonization under **P**. The largest member (the case where the largest number of satisfaction situations are added to the set) of a **P**-harmonized sequence of similarity sets at a certain point in time is called the *quasi-concept* of  $e$  with respect to the available set of data under perspective **P**.

Here, something should be said about the importance of the perspective. The perspective ensures a minimal transitivity of the similarity relationship in the subsets of the experienced satisfaction situations, or put differently: it ensures that the members in this set are identical in at least one respect. Furthermore it ensures that similarity is restricted to relevant identities between satisfaction situations and it creates a meaningful relationship of contrast or opposition. This is because the members of a similarity set for the use of expression  $e$  under a perspective **P** have to be more similar

---

<sup>1</sup> The principles for forming perspectives must be specified at the beginning of the process of concept formation, otherwise the concept formation may lead to an infinite regress of perspectives taken to view the data, which in turn leads to an infinite regress of concepts. Note for example that languages differ considerably in their conceptualizations, which means that in principle the language learner might be guided by different perspectives in the process of concept formation. In the theory of Bartsch (1998) the first stage of concept formation does not involve conscious judgments of similarity and contiguity. Basic and direct experiences of the data provide the learner with perspectives. In the first stage of concept formation, so-called chain complexes are formed by the child (Vygotsky, 1986). In this stage, the meaning of a word is not constant for the child, and is not restricted by correction (Ginsburg & Opper, 1988: 79). In this preconceptual stage, the child both overgeneralizes and overspecifies (ibid.: 82). In the process of learning a language, however, the systematization of the language is an important factor from the start of the process of concept formation. Perspectives are therefore not only inferred from basic and direct experiences of similarity and contiguity, but the experience of similarity is partly inferred by the language – that is the unity in *form* — itself.

to each other than to members of similarity sets for the use of expressions  $e'$  under  $\mathbf{P}$ . This means that the existence of opposition classes plays a considerable part in the process of concept formation.

With the ordering relationship between the growing subsets of data there corresponds a converse ordering relationship between the degrees of internal similarity of these sets. For each member of a speech community, the ordered set of sets of satisfaction situations for  $e$  forms a sequence  $\Sigma$  of growing sets which converges to a limit at which further growth of the similarity sets no longer affects their degree of internal similarity (adding a new satisfaction situation does not change the perceived similarity that holds the different cases together). The finitely converging sequence  $\mathbf{F}$  results in an equivalence class of growing similarity sets which are equivalent in that they do no longer change in degree of internal similarity under  $\mathbf{P}^i$ , i.e. when new satisfaction situations are added the degree of similarity remains stable. This is the maximal equivalence class of a sequence  $\mathbf{F}$ , and all the elements of this class can be seen as a cognitive reconstruction, i.e. *concepts* of the situational property expressed by  $e$ .

To summarize one can say that a set of satisfaction situations of an expression under a particular perspective ( $\mathbf{S}_{e,i}$ ) in a sequence  $\Sigma$  is complete with respect to a concept expressed by an expression  $e$  iff there is

- (i) **Stabilization:** Instances of satisfaction situations of  $e$  under  $i$  no longer change the degree of similarity any longer, or they are not incorporated into the concept, but are considered to be marginal cases. This means that the process of concept formation terminates, i.e. the sequence of quasi-concepts is stabilized and results in a concept.
- (ii) **Polysemy:** Different concepts which can be expressed by  $e$  are distinguished by being concepts under different perspectives.
- (iii) **Opposition:** A concept is not overextended under a perspective  $\mathbf{P}_i$ ; this means that  $\mathbf{S}_{e,i}$  is delineated by its oppositions  $\mathbf{S}_{e',i}$  expressed by different  $e'$  under the same perspective.

An important point in Bartsch's theory of concept formation is that a concept is formed relative to certain contextual factors, which select certain perspectives under which similarity and difference is measured, and that with an expression there corresponds a complex of concepts, each related to a context type or perspective. In the process of concept formation the strategies of metaphor (transfer of use based on similarity under a particular perspective) and metonymy (a transfer based on contiguity under a particular

perspective) play a considerable role; in the sections below I will discuss these strategies in some detail.

Lakoff & Johnson (1980: 113) claim that the notion of similarity can play no part in a theory of concept or metaphor since many instances of metaphor cannot be based on any kind of similarity. They argue, for example, that the metaphor *He is feeling up* cannot be based on some kind of similarity between happiness and the basic spatial concept expressed by *up*. Although Lakoff & Johnson (1980) do not discuss this explicitly, their notion of similarity is basically similarity in substance, form, color, etc. In Bartsch (1998), however, similarity is always similarity under a particular perspective, and these perspectives are not restricted to similarity in substance, form, color, etc., but may also be similarity in goal, function, etc. In the case of the example given by Lakoff & Johnson the similarity may be explained as follows: the concept 'healthy person' is similar to the concept 'up' from the perspective of posture, since an erect posture usually goes along with a positive emotional state.

It must be noted that the theory of concept formation discussed here in principle allows for different kinds of conceptual association with forms. One possibility is that the complex of concepts is formed under a common perspective. This is the case for example with prototypically organized categories (see Rosch, 1973, 1978), and categories that are organized by family resemblance (for example the concept *Spiel* as discussed by Wittgenstein (1984), where all the instances can be seen as 'activities'). Another possibility is that the complex of concepts cannot be seen under a common perspective. Note that the existence of a common perspective does not imply that this common perspective defines a necessary and sufficient condition for the use of an expression. To give an example: all games can be seen as activities, but not every activity is a game.

Finally, something should be said about the generation of the polysemous complex. Bartsch (1998) mainly addresses the question of how the existent conceptual structure can be learned by the language learner. Although Bartsch (1998) briefly discusses general principles of generation of the polysemous complex (cf. Bartsch, 1998: 96–117), she does not explicitly discuss regularities in the cultural and physical basis of concept formation. Lakoff & Johnson (1980) make typological claims about the systematic nature of polysemous complexes. In the theory of Lakoff & Johnson (1980: 5), the basic force behind the creation of polysemous complexes is the understanding and experiencing of one kind of thing in terms of another, a principle which they call

'metaphor'.<sup>2</sup> They argue that since human beings are grounded both physically and culturally, conceptualization mirrors this specific grounding. An example is the GOOD IS UP metaphor, which according to Lakoff & Johnson (1980) is prevalent in languages across cultures because of the shared physical features of humans. Lakoff & Johnson (1980: 59, 112–113) further claim that one can speak of metaphor if something abstract, or non-physical, is understood in terms of something concrete or physical, and that metaphor theories that are based on similarity cannot have this notion of directionality. In my opinion, this is an incorrect conclusion. The theory of concept formation of Bartsch (1998), which is based on the notions similarity and contiguity, leaves room for understanding an abstract thing in terms of a physical thing. It can be expected that in the process of generation of metaphor, basic experiences, both physically basic and culturally basic, will serve as the starting point of generation of polysemy.

### **2.3 Linguistic example of concept formation**

The treatment of concept formation given in Bartsch (1998) is rather theoretical in nature, and is not illustrated with many linguistic examples. To illuminate the process of concept formation as discussed above, I will briefly discuss a specific example, viz. the possible formation of the concept of the verb *eat*. Note that I do not claim to give an exhaustive analysis of this verb. The analysis must be seen as a means to illustrate the basic mechanisms that can play a part in *every* instance of concept-formation.

Before giving an analysis of the verb *eat*, I first would like to make some remarks on the status of the analysis, and the status of linguistic analyses in general. The process of concept formation on the experiential level cannot be seen as a process whereby the language learner has to form hypotheses about criteria in some innate mental language in the sense of Fodor (1976). Similarity between experienced situations must be seen as a basic cognitive notion, and must be stated on the basis of identity of causal effects of identical quasi-parts of situations on the individual. These causal effects are purely physiological, i.e. they are bodily reactions, and cannot be seen as concepts themselves (see Bartsch, 1998: 40). Note that this description applies mainly to *perceptual* similarity, viz. similarity from the perspective of form, color, etc. In many cases, however, two objects may be similar from the perspective of *function*. Experiences of interaction with

---

<sup>2</sup> The importance of the principle of analogy, and the importance of physical grounding is of course explicitly remarked and analyzed by many scholars before Lakoff & Johnson, for example by the psychologist Piaget (see, e.g., Ginsburg & Opper, 1988).

different objects (e.g. a particular stone, and a piece of wood) may be judged to be similar, for example because the different objects all serve a similar purpose (they can be used as tools to hunt animals). As such this perceived identity may be traced back to identity of intention or attitude of the conceptualizer, and consequently to bodily reactions.

The analysis of meaning in terms of features is a linguistically expressed reconstruction of meaning based on the available linguistic data. This reconstruction is not an analysis of the mental processes that take place in the mind of the language user. In effect, it is very unlikely that a reconstruction expressed in language by the linguist might come close to a reconstruction of what actually takes place in the human mind.

It must further be noted that the norms of language users must be seen as norms of *product*, rather than norms of *production*. Norms of product can be seen as norms that define the notion of a correct product of type X, whereas norms of production can be seen as norms that define how a product must be made or generated. The rules stated by linguists often claim to be norms of production, although such a claim can hardly ever be proved by independent evidence (e.g. psychological or neurological evidence). Rules of the kind stated by linguists normally have a very abstract character, that is, they can be seen as abstractions over linguistic data. The abstract character of linguistic rules is often evident from the use of theoretical notions. The rules formulated by the linguist can therefore not be seen as *norms*, rather should be seen as *systematizations* of and behind a set of norms. Such systematizations may be the result of a general principle in a specific language, or may have a more general character; such a general character may point at some shared biological or cognitive background.

The abstractions of the linguist are abstractions made over occurrences of language data of the *linguistic system* and not direct descriptions of the mental processes that underlie language use. Of course, the linguistic system is created by humans, and of course the structure of the linguistic system is restricted by the boundaries of our human capacities. This does not mean, however, that we can ascribe to the individual a knowledge of particular principles governing regularities in the linguistic system. In the process of language learning the language user will try to build new sentences by analogy to sentences that he has already encountered, rather than trying to formulate one abstract rule that can describe the different sentences correctly.<sup>3</sup> As such, the abstractions made by the linguist have no psychological reality as *rules*. Nevertheless the description of the linguist has a relation with human cognition. Linguists describe and postulate relations between linguistic products. Such relations also play a part in the

---

<sup>3</sup> For the strategy of analogy in concept formation I refer to the works of Piaget (see for references Ginsburg & Opper, 1988) and Vygotsky (1986).

case of language users, since judgments about the acceptability of a form in context X are based on the use of the same form in context Y. This means that on the level of understandability there is a correspondence between the method of the linguist and that of the language user.

To recapitulate my main point: it must be noted that the analysis I am about to give cannot be seen as an analysis in terms of norms, but must be seen as abstract reconstruction of the linguist. Such a reconstruction cannot be seen as the description in terms of a rule of the mental process that takes place in our heads when we construct a concept. But the reconstruction shows something about the understandability of certain forms, in the light of previous cases of use of this form. This understandability lies on the level of relationships between linguistic products and their use, though not on the level of production itself.

I will now start with the concept formation of *eat*. In the following sentences we find the verb *eat* with different objects and in (e) with a different subject:

Set of data:

- a. Jan is *eating* an apple.
- b. Jan is *eating* a pear.
- c. Jan is *eating* a cookie.
- d. Jan is *eating* a toffee.
- e. The dog is *eating* a cookie.

The sentences above refer to different satisfaction situations, namely the situation of Jan eating an apple, Jan eating a pear etc. Let us imagine that these satisfaction situations are immediately present while uttering these sentences such that someone utters these sentences while pointing at the different satisfaction situations. This means that we have five pairs of experiences of utterances and the corresponding satisfaction situations. Let us assume furthermore that the language learner has already learned the other concepts in the sentences. It must be noted that in the actual process of language learning this is often not the case: the meaning of *eat* may be reconstructed by reconstructing at the same time the meaning of – for example – *pear*. This does not, however, change the fundamental strategies that underlie the process of concept-formation. How, then, can the process of concept formation be analysed in the case of this example? One can proceed from the assumption that the language learner will try to look for an overarching common perspective. This perspective functions as a

criterion for similarity and contiguity between the different *eat* situations. Because we are confronted here with a verb, the first perspective will be ‘what kind of situation (= action, state, process) do we find in all of these cases? On the basis of unity of form the language user may abstract from all the situations and classify on the basis of phenomena that the linguist can describe and explicate as follows:

‘Something is taken into the mouth, and swallowed’

As one feature presupposes the other (e.g. the idea of swallowing presupposes the idea of something that is swallowed, and the idea of a mouth that does the swallowing), the different features given here do not have an independent status but must be seen as interdependent.

The description of *eat* given here is a case of overgeneralization because *oppositional classes* are not taken into account: the description also applies to a *drink* situation. It may be that the interpreter will start to classify by overgeneralizing, but it may also be that he will classify differently by choosing different perspectives under which similarity and contiguity is measured. Such perspectives could be for example ‘what kind of food is the object of the action’ (fruit versus other eatable things), ‘what kind of movements are made with the mouth’ (chewing versus sucking), ‘what kind of subject is doing the action’ (human versus animal). According to these perspectives different subsets can be constructed. In the process of concept formation such different classifications could be viewed as quasi-concepts relative to a particular set of data. They are not concepts yet because addition of new examples may still change their internal stability. Note that such perspectives are chosen *only* if these differences are relevant to the language user.<sup>4</sup> To give an example, in Dutch the word *eten* (‘eat’) can be used for both humans and animals, whereas the human mouth is called *mond*, and the mouth of animal is called *bek*. This does not imply that the language user who knows how to use the word *eten* for humans has to take a new perspective if he learns that it can also be used in relation to

---

<sup>4</sup> Here we touch upon the question of the extent to which there is a universal cognitive basis for this process, and the extent there are cultural criteria that play a part in this process. Bartsch (1998) does not specifically address this question. The only criteria in her model are provided by the linguistic system (i.e. the existence of oppositional forms). Note that the need for taking such additional perspectives may, in the case of second language learning, also be provided by the linguistic categorization of the learner of the new language. Thus if another language has different verbs for chewing food and sucking food, without an overarching term, the learner will probably classify differently when learning English.

animals. In the case of *eten* this difference is irrelevant since both *mond* and *bek* can be viewed under one perspective.

As I remarked earlier, the quasi-concept of the verb *eat* given above is a case of overgeneralization, because on the basis of this concept the language user may use the verb *eat* for 'drink' situations. To construct the right concept of *eat*, the following sentences with their satisfaction situations are given:

New set of data:

- f. Jan is *drinking* coffee.
- g. Jan is *drinking* milk.

The description given of the verb *eat* also applies to these situations: in this case too some food is taken through the mouth. On the assumption that a particular situation falls under one concept and not under another, the language learner may look for another perspective, viz. 'type of object' or 'the way in which the subject prepares the food in his mouth'.<sup>5</sup> One may for example classify as follows: solid versus liquid. One can then define the following (quasi-)concepts:

*eat* =<sub>def</sub>

'taking into the mouth and swallowing of solid food, prototypically by chewing'  
(examples of objects: apple, pear, toffee)

---

<sup>5</sup> The condition that the correct description of a form may not define oppositional forms is not valid for inclusive forms, but in some cases the difference between *oppositional* forms and *inclusive* forms is not straightforward. I will give an example. A scene where someone is taking food is conceptualized in English by using the word *eat*. It is possible, however, to focus on the specific way the food is taken into the mouth; in such cases one could, in the appropriate context, also use words like *gobble*, *gulp* or *stuff*. One could argue that these concepts are included in the concept *eat*. This means that the relation between *eat* and *gulp* or *stuff* is analogous to the relation between *flower* and *rose*. I do not think, however, that this view is entirely correct. The word *eat* is used not only as a hypernym for different ways in which food is taken, but also to conceptualize the conventional way in which solid food is taken. You can therefore say *I don't call that eating, that's stuffing* but not *this is not a flower but a rose*. What does this imply for the linguistic description? It means that the description of the word *eat*<sup>1</sup> is 'taking of solid food' whereas the description of the words *eat*<sup>2</sup>, *gobble* and *stuff* may be 'taking of food specified in such and such a manner'.

*drink* =<sub>def</sub>

‘taking into the mouth and swallowing of liquid food’  
(examples of objects: coffee, tea)

We add to the set: eggs, bananas, orange juice etc., which does not change the internal stability of the set. It seems that the process of concept formation has now terminated; adding new examples no longer changes the degree of similarity and such examples are incorporated into the concept. Examples that would change the internal similarity (i.e. change the stability) are considered to be marginal cases, in other words, the concept has *stabilized*.

The concept soup exemplifies such a marginal case. Let us imagine that we add the word *soup* with its satisfaction situations:

Jan is *eating* soup  
Jan is *drinking* soup

The adding of *soup* to *eat* is problematic because it is liquid; *soup* therefore disturbs the internal stability of the set of satisfaction situations. This necessitates the taking of a new perspective for *soup*, viz. ‘way it is put in the mouth’: in the case of a mug, one speaks of *drinking* soup, in the case of a bowl and a spoon one speaks of *eating* soup.

In the case of *soup*, it may be argued that there has been *broadening of context of use*. In order to incorporate ‘eating soup’ into the concept of *eat*, the concept *eat* is broadened such that all the uses of this verb can be seen under the perspective of ‘taking food’. Such broadening of context does not occur randomly. The fact that ‘soup’ when taken with a spoon does not fall under the concept of ‘drink’ is thus not coincidental. As I mentioned, a possible explanation for this may be that it is typical of liquids like tea, coffee, etc. that they are swallowed by putting the mouth to a container (mug, etc.). This is not the case with ‘soup’, where we use a spoon, which is typical of many cases of ‘eat’. For this reason a ‘soup taking’ situation is conceptualized as more similar to an ‘eat situation’ than to a ‘drink situation’. A more complicated case would occur if we took coffee from a bowl with a spoon. Is this a case of ‘eat’ or of ‘drink’? If one chooses to see it as a case of ‘eat’ this means that one emphasizes the fact that the way in which the coffee is taken is typical of solid food. If one conceptualizes it as a case of ‘drink’, then one emphasizes the fact that coffee is a typical drink, which means that it is

normally not seen as an instance of food (unlike ‘soup’).<sup>6</sup> Such judgments play a part in deciding under which concept a particular situation falls, and point at the relevance for the linguistic system of taking into account such things as the way that something is eaten. In these marginal cases of transfer of the verb ‘eat’, the transfer can be understood via partial similarity.

Another potential explanation for the possibility of *eating soup* is that *soup* usually contains solid parts or can be seen as a more solid type of liquid, which makes it a borderline case between solid food and liquid food. It could be argued that in the case of *eating soup* the emphasis is on the solid nature of the substance, and the fact that we may have to chew it. In the case of *drinking soup*, we emphasize on the fact that the substance can be seen as a liquid. Note, however, that this explanation does not account for the fact that we can also eat soup if the soup does not contain solid parts at all.

It is possible that both explanations are to some extent valid. It can be argued that in the case of soup or yoghurt the substance itself must be seen as a borderline case between solid food and liquid food. Because of this borderline character, both substances are taken using a spoon, or directly from a container. If we take the soup directly from a container, we focus on the fact that it is liquid enough to drink, whereas if we take it with a spoon, we focus on the fact that it is not liquid enough to drink. The perspective that we take to view the substance is not based on ‘objective’ ontological information, since the same substance can be viewed differently, depending on the context or situation in which it occurs. Here, it must be noted that we should bear in mind that the different ways of reconstructing the relation between the marginal *eat* cases and the basic *eat* cases show that such relations need not be seen as part of the knowledge of the language user. Such relations must rather be seen as systematizations of and behind a set of norms.

The occurrence of *eating soup* may be evidence for the existence of prototypical effects in the case of *eat*. It could be argued that the central member of *eat* is represented by that case where ‘solid food is taken into the mouth and swallowed’. *Eating soup* can be seen as a marginal case, because it lacks basic features of the central case such as the solidity of the food. It is nevertheless conceptualized as a case of *eat*

---

<sup>6</sup> Note that the fact that we perceive this example as very hypothetical points at the inter-subjective normative status of linguistic knowledge. In the case of new examples that are not yet incorporated in the linguistic norm, people find it difficult to make judgments about correct or non-correct use of a word. This implies that people are not equipped with well-defined information for the correct use of form, but follow the norms of language that they have learned.

because it shows more similarity to *some* central *eat* cases than to oppositional forms; put differently, it shows more similarity to those *eat* cases where a spoon (or a similar instrument) is used, than to *drink* cases, which only occur with liquid substances. Note that the feature of the eat-cases which selects the categorization of taking soup under *eat*, cannot be seen as a *basic* feature of the central *eat* cases. The basic feature of *eat* is the relative solidity of the food, and consequently the fact that we have to chew or suck the food; the fact that in many cases we use a spoon to eat must be seen as a non-basic feature of the central cases, because many central cases lack this feature (e.g. eating an apple). There is no reason to assume that eating an apple, where one does not use tools, must be seen as a less basic case of the verb *eat* than eating porridge, where one does. It may, however, be seen as a feature that is more typical of *eat* cases of oppositional classes. In other words, for the linguistic system, taking solid food with the use of tools is more typical of *eat* cases, than taking liquid food with the use of tools is of *drink* cases.<sup>7</sup>

I would like to point to the fact that the description given so far may apply to cases that cannot be seen as correct uses of the verb *eat*. I will illustrate this with an example. Following the description of the verb *eat* given above, one would expect that one could use the word *eat* for pills. However, this is not the case: *?John is eating his pills*. In this case one has to use the verb *take*: *John is taking his pills*. I do not think that such facts can be accounted for in the meaning or meanings of the verb *eat*. That is not to say that no ‘explanation’ can be given for this fact. It is possible that ‘pills’ are not considered to be typical food or nurture, and as such, do not fall under the type of objects that can be applied to the *eat* concept. Furthermore, in many cases pills are taken without chewing them, whereas chewing is a feature typical of many *eat* cases.

The structure of the linguistic system is a conventional structure that results from inter-subjective agreement about the correct use of a word. Agreement about the correct use of a word may be quite unproblematic for central cases, such as the situation of eating an apple, but may be more problematic where marginal cases are concerned. The act of taking pills may from one perspective be seen as similar to the *eat* cases, but from another perspective as less similar. In the linguistic system, on the basis of inter-subjective agreement, conventions may arise as to how the act will be conceptualized in the linguistic system. Such conceptualizations are not the result of a random process, but are based on particular perspectives under which similarity and difference is measured. Similarity or difference is, however, to some extent a subjective

---

<sup>7</sup> There is also be a relation between solidity and the use of tools on the one hand, and liquidity and the use of a container on the other.

notion.<sup>8</sup> This means that in principle different people may have different ways of seeing things as similar or different; because of the subjective nature of conceptualization, different languages may differ in the way they conceptualize similar domains. This means that for the language learner it may be possible to understand or to construct the utterance 'eating pills', but it is not possible to predict the norms of the given language; norms are conventional and have to be learned.

The concept formation of the verb *eat* has not yet terminated. Now we add the following sentence (with satisfaction situation) to the considered set of data:

New data:

h. Jealousy was eating him up

In this sentence the verb *eat* occurs with the preposition *up* and the subject *jealousy*. According to the strategy considered above, the language user would try to incorporate the given examples in the sets of equivalence classes considered before. So far two sets have been constructed, viz. 'taking of solid nurture into the mouth to swallow' and 'taking of liquid nurture into the mouth with a spoon to swallow'. The example given above cannot be incorporated in the subsets constructed so far because the subject 'jealousy' is an abstract entity and nothing is consumed by being taking into the mouth. This forces the language user to find a perspective that provides a basis for identity between (h) and the sets constructed so far. In the case of (h) the similarity could be described as follows. If you eat a cake, you gradually take possession of the cake by putting it in your mouth or body; if someone is eaten up by jealousy, the jealousy is gradually taking possession of this person by controlling all his thoughts. The preposition *up*, which expresses the perfective nature of the situation, probably emphasizes the fact that nothing remains of the object of the verb. But there is more to it, if someone is eaten up by jealousy he is destroyed by it, which is not necessarily the case if someone is possessed by jealousy. This specific feature can be motivated by pointing at the basic meaning of *eat*: in the case of 'eat' the object of the action gets destroyed, and is mashed up into small pieces.

This particular use of the word *eat* is usually classified in the literature as *metaphorical* use, in contrast to the word *eat* in sentences like *John ate an apple*. The difference between metaphorical and non-metaphorical use of a form is based on the linguistic intuition that some uses are more 'basic' and 'literal', while others seem to be 'non-literal' and

---

<sup>8</sup> Of course, there are biological restrictions on the way we perceive similarity and difference.

'derived from the basic use'. The strategy of concept formation in the case of metaphor can be described in general terms as selecting features under change of perspectives provided by contexts, and enriching the new way of using the expression with additional features originating from the new cases of use. It must be noted that feature clash and elimination of features is not part of meaning extensions such as the one discussed here. I agree with Bartsch (1998: 97), who contends that so-called feature clash is merely the result of the inappropriate application of an otherwise prominent perspective of interpretation in circumstances in which another perspective is at issue. Flexibility of perspectives, and the choice of a perspective by assuming a certain question, or interest implicit or explicit in the situational context, prevents feature clash from the outset.

There may be different reasons for the use of metaphoric extensions in language, for example (i) the *understanding* of one thing in terms of another, such as the restructuring of complicated, abstract experiences in terms of basic and physical experiences (see Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), (ii) the necessity to *express* a large quantity of things with a limited set of words; in this sense language can be expected to have a metaphoric structure, because without metaphoric interpretation the stability of the system would be disturbed, and (iii) the need to create new ways of viewing particular things by seeing something under a new perspective, for 'poetic' reasons.

Besides metaphor, *metonymy* plays an important part in the process of concept formation (Bartsch, 1998: 57). Following Jakobson (1960), these two main processes of linguistic extension can be described in terms of 'transfer by similarity' and 'transfer by contiguity' respectively. An example of the everyday importance of the strategy of contiguity can be illustrated with the understanding of the word *salt* on a salt cellar. Without any problem we understand that this word does not refer to the salt cellar itself, but to the contents of the salt cellar. The salt cellar and its contents cannot be seen as similar in some way or another, but stand in a relation of contiguity: the salt cellar *contains* the salt. In the case of metonymy, a word that is used to refer to x, is used to refer to some phenomenon y that stands in a contiguity relationship with x, for example, *They painted the university white*, where *white* does not refer to the institution but to the building which houses the institution.

I have discussed the possible concept-formation of the word *eat* here. It must be noted that the process of concept-formation of a word is inherently dynamic, and as such never really ends. This does not mean, however, that there are no restrictions on the process of concept formation of a word. Infinite extensions of meaning would lead to a disturbance of the stability of the linguistic system. In the model of Bartsch (1998)

the stability of the system is provided by the fact that different concepts which can be expressed by a word are distinguished by being concepts under different perspectives. Furthermore, a concept is not overextended under a perspective because of the existence of oppositional classes.

In Bartsch's (1998) model, forms are normally associated with different interrelated meanings. Although this opinion about meaning is well accepted in most of the psychological and linguistic literature (see for example Rosch, 1978; Bartsch, 1984; Lakoff, 1990; Sandra & Rice, 1995), there is still discussion as to whether a distinction should be made between (*general*) *meaning* and *context-dependent meaning* or *interpretation*. In the following section, I will briefly discuss the issue of whether there is something like a literal meaning or general meaning of a form, and whether it is useful to make a distinction between literal meaning and context-dependent meaning.

#### **2.4 General meaning and context-dependent meaning**

In language, concepts are associated with forms, which serve as a formal (morphological) criterion to identify concepts. It seems, therefore, that a good starting point for the linguist is to look for a one-to-one correspondence between meaning and form, or put differently, to look for monosemy, rather than polysemy. This is made clear in the following extract from Palmer (1981: 101), where he speaks about the meaning of the word *eat*:

“If we decide, however, that there are two meanings of *eat*, we may then ask whether eating jelly is the same thing as eating toffee (which involves chewing) or eating sweets (which involves sucking). Clearly we eat different types of food in different ways, and, if we are not careful, we shall decide that the verb *eat* has a different meaning with every type of food that we eat. The moral is that we ought not to look for all possible differences of meaning, but to look for sameness of meaning as far as we can, and to accept that there is no clear criterion of either difference or sameness.”

The same can be said in terms of the process of concept formation discussed earlier. If we construct the meaning of *eat* on the basis of ‘eating jelly’, adding new examples like ‘eating toffee’ or ‘eating sweets’ does not disturb the internal stability of the constructed set so far, which implies that all these uses can be viewed under the same perspective.

Although the postulation of the ‘one-meaning-one-form-principle’ may be a good starting point for the linguist, it is very often the case that one form has many different

'uses' that can be clearly distinguished. This phenomenon is accounted for in monosemous approaches by the postulation of general meanings and context-dependent meanings. Consider the following extract from the Russian structuralist linguist Jakobson (1971: 179) about the meaning of the Russian cases:

"In analysing cases or some other morphological category we face two distinct and interconnected questions: the morphological INVARIANT, 'intension', general meaning of any case within the given declensional system must be distinguished from the contextual, syntactically and/ or lexically conditioned variants, 'extension', actual application of the case in question."

If we ignore his rather unfortunate terminology, we see that Jakobson makes a distinction between *general meaning* and *context-dependent* meaning.<sup>9</sup> The general meaning is the meaning that 'occurs' in all the different uses of a particular form. Meanings that occur in one use but not in another, can be said to be conditioned by the context, and can therefore be called context-dependent or context-specific. One can say that context-dependent meanings, also called *interpretations*, are the result of the interaction of the general meaning and the specific linguistic or non-linguistic context in which they occur. Other terms used in the literature are 'use', 'usage', 'sense', and 'variant'. The term 'interpretation' is also used for the process of inference whereby meanings are inferred from uses by abstraction. Meanings must be seen as *abstractions* from different uses of a form, where the context-specific information is abstracted, that is they must be seen as belonging to that which is a *variant*. The notion of abstraction used here can be seen as the traditional Aristotelian notion of abstraction, namely the omission of qualities.<sup>10</sup>

The idea that one can distinguish between general meaning and context-dependent meaning can be illustrated by the work of the philosopher Searle (1991 [1983]: 145–

---

<sup>9</sup> Jakobson's use of the terms *intension* and *extension* does not accord with their use in philosophy (as defined by Frege). In philosophy the term *extension* is used to indicate a state of affairs or objects designated by a term in the world or in a possible world to which a word refers.

<sup>10</sup> A problem with this description (see Damerow, 1996, for a discussion) is that it seems arbitrary which qualities can be omitted, and which cannot. A second problem is that it is not clear how the discontinuous transition between two qualitatively very dissimilar domains is to be explained by means of a continuous process of omitting qualities of the concrete object. In other words, it is not clear how one can proceed from a concrete object to very abstract notions, such as mathematical notions. Various scholars (e.g. Kant, Hume, Hegel, Piaget, etc.) have tried to take account of these problems in their definition and description of the process of abstraction.

149), who provides a philosophical background for the idea of general meaning versus context-dependent meaning. Searle discusses the meaning of the verb *open* and claims that it has the same meaning in the following cases:

- a. Tom opened a door
- b. Bill opened a restaurant
- c. Sally opened her eyes
- d. The surgeon opened the wound
- e. The chairman opened the meeting
- f. The artillery opened fire

Searle's point is that although the semantic content contributed by the word *open* is the same in the sentences above, the semantic content that is understood is quite different in each case. According to Searle, understanding language means more than just grasping the meaning of the forms. In the understanding of language our Background, that is the whole of capacities, learned abilities, unquestioned cultural and natural preconditions of everyday conduct, plays an essential role. It is only via the Background that the literal meaning can be interpreted, or put differently, can get a satisfaction situation.

I would like to point out here that Searle uses the term 'literal meaning' both for the highest abstraction of the semantics of some form (the invariant), and for the non-metaphoric meaning of some form. In Searle's theory the general meaning and the literal meaning coincide. I will use the term general meaning for the abstract meaning of some form (the highest abstraction), and the term literal meaning for the basic and non-metaphoric meaning of some form. In my opinion, these two phenomena should be kept separate.

The most important point made by Searle is that in the construction 'X opens Y' the information that we have about X and Y is not part of the semantics of the verb *open*. Semantics deals with abstractions from use, and does not have to refer to actual satisfaction situations. Searle makes a sharp distinction between that which is part of semantics (what he calls literal meaning), that which is intentional and therefore conscious knowledge, and that knowledge which is not part of semantics.

The term Background knowledge can partly be identified with what is called in the literature *encyclopedic* knowledge. Another term used in the literature is *pragmatic* knowledge. The term 'pragmatic knowledge' is somehow confusing, because it is used for different things. It is used both for non-linguistic knowledge in general (including

encyclopedic knowledge), and more specifically for the knowledge of the language user that concerns 'pragmatics', a field of research that can be defined as "the study of meaning in relation to speech situations" (Leech, 1989: 6). According to the latter definition, pragmatic knowledge can be seen as the knowledge of the language user of pragmatic principles of communication or conversational implicatures like clarity, cooperativity, economy, etc. Many linguists who distinguish meaning from interpretation, claim that every competent language user has knowledge of these pragmatic rules, and that such rules do not have to be accounted for as part of the *semantic* description of language. Levinson, for example, argues with respect to the conversational implicatures that "it allows one to claim that natural language expressions do tend to have simple, stable and unitary senses (in many cases anyway), but that this stable semantic core often has an unstable, context-specific pragmatic overlay – namely a set of implicatures" (Levinson, 1983: 99–100).

Searle further distinguishes cases of literal meaning from cases of metaphoric meaning. The latter must be seen as secondary uses, where the sentence meaning does not coincide with the utterance meaning, and where one has to speak of a secondary meaning derived from the literal meaning. In most monosemous approaches a distinction is made between so called literal meaning and derived meaning. Consider for example the following extract from Wierzbicka:

"A word can be adequately defined only if its literal meaning is distinguished from its metaphorical use, ironic use, playful use, euphemistic use, and other similar uses. Dictionaries frequently fail in this respect, and, for example, treat a word's metaphorical use as a separate lexical meaning." (1996: 244)

Although this is often not explicitly defined in the linguistic analysis, monosemous approaches use the term 'interpretation' for the following two phenomena:

- (i) Specification
- (ii) Adjusting

In the case of what I will call *specification*, the interpretation can be seen as a specification of the (relatively) underspecified abstraction by means of the context. This specification is the result of the interaction of the abstraction and the information provided by the context. Put differently: the abstraction can be seen as an abstraction from such interpretations.

In the case of *adjusting*, the interpretation does not fall directly under the necessary and sufficient condition for the correct use of a form, which is contained by the abstraction. Under the influence of the context some features of the abstraction are selected while others are backgrounded (in other words, the meaning is *adjusted*). This means that the abstraction cannot be seen as an abstraction from such adjusted uses, but such uses must be seen as *directly derived* from the information contained in the abstraction. As the principles of adjustment such as metaphor, metonymy, etc. are thought to be part of the general knowledge of language users, and the basic meaning always plays a part in such cases, adjustments are seen as a category of use, rather than a category of meaning.<sup>11</sup>

In summary we can say that both the structuralist linguist Jakobson and the language philosopher Searle make the following two different yet interrelated claims:

- (i) Meanings can be seen as *abstractions* from different uses of a form, where the context specific information is abstracted. As such, there is a distinction between *semantic* information and *non-semantic* information.
- (ii) The general meaning can be seen as the highest abstraction, that is, an abstraction from the *whole* set of occurrences of the form in the considered set of data. The general meaning can be seen as a necessary and sufficient condition for the correctness of *all* the uses of a particular form, which means that the general meaning defines all the uses of a form without defining other uses.

It could be argued that an important point of the one-form-one-meaning approach is that it tries to offer a unitary generalization, which can be seen as an aim of scientific analyses in general. Because of this, the semantic analysis does not have to postulate an infinite number of meanings for forms. Although it seems a good starting point to look for unity of meaning *as far as possible*, discussion can arise about how we should define 'as far as possible'. Furthermore, it is not clear to what extent the need for unification that underlies the research of linguists actually mirrors the structure of the linguistic system, or whether it is actually intended to somehow mirror the way in which language users process meanings. Below I will discuss some of the possible arguments for and against the idea of monosemy.

---

<sup>11</sup> Note that confusion sometimes arises in discussions about polysemy and monosemy because in the case of adjustments some linguists speak of monosemy, whereas others speak of 'polysemy'.

## 2.5 Case study: The meaning of *open*

As I have discussed above, monosemous approaches to language make two basic claims, viz. (i) that meanings must be seen as abstractions from different uses, and (ii) that for most forms in language general meanings can be given that can be seen as necessary and sufficient conditions for the correct use of a form. In the literature this view of meaning has been fiercely attacked by various scholars such as Bartsch (1984), Lakoff (1990), Rosch (1973, 1978) and Wittgenstein (1984). In this section I will briefly discuss some of the criticism. I will start by discussing the specific example used by Searle (1991) to illustrate the idea of general meaning, viz. the verb *open*. Searle made some far-reaching theoretical claims about meaning in general without giving a detailed data-oriented analysis. To remedy this shortcoming, I will try to give more insight into the meaning of *open*.

In my discussion of this verb *open* I will focus on the transitive use of the verb *open*, rather than on the intransitive use (e.g. *The door opens*) or the adjective use (*The door is open*). Furthermore, I will not discuss oppositional uses and other semantically related uses such as the verb *close*. Of course, for a complete analysis of the verb *open* these uses should also be taken into account. I think, however, that the examples discussed here are sufficient to give greater insight into the structure of the verb *open*, and to illustrate my more general point about the structure of meaning.

If there is something like a general meaning of the verb *open*, the physical action that constitutes the act of ‘opening’ cannot be seen as an essential part of this meaning, which is underlined by the different ways in which something can be opened. Compare for example the differences between opening a book, an umbrella, and a meeting. It seems that what these uses have in common is, roughly speaking, the functional act of making something accessible, rather than the physical act that constitutes this functional goal. In order to investigate what this functional goal exactly is, and whether this functional act can be seen as the *meaning* of the verb *open*, it is necessary to take a closer look at the different examples of the verb *open*.

### 2.5.1 Case 1: Path through Y to contents of Y

The discussion of *open* can best be introduced by considering a *clear* or *basic* example of *open* Y, for which it is possible to define two features that play an important part in different meaning extensions of the form:

- Creating of path to Y ('you want to get to the contents of Y')
- Removing a barrier blocking the path to Y creating of path through Y ('you want to get through Y to get to something')

This basic use of *open* is exemplified by cases like opening a box, one's mouth, or a bottle:

- (1) Sally is my favorite doll. My mouth dropped to the floor when I **opened** the box.
- (2) I sighed and **opened** my mouth, put in the ball gag and buckled it tightly behind my head.
- (3) The importance of this discovery cannot be underestimated for a wine bottle is not just a container. In Hugh Johnson's words, "it is a sealed vessel in which the wine, protected from air, holds its complex potencies in readiness for the day when it is drunk. Once the bottle is **opened**, the wine is exposed to the destructive side effects of oxygen and there is no going back."

In these cases the object of the action denoted by the verb can be seen as a container that is initially closed. This means that it is not possible to have access to the inner part of the container. By opening the container a path is created *through* the container *to* the inner part of the container. The goal of the action may be to reach the content of the container, to put something into the container, to let something out of it, or just to look what is inside. These cases could be described in natural language as follows:

$x$  opens  $Y$  ( $Y = \textit{mouth, bottle, box, etc.}$ ) =<sub>def</sub>  
 $x$  creates a path through  $a$  to  $b$

where:

' $Y$ ' can be seen as a container, ' $a$ ' as part of the exterior of the container, and ' $b$ ' as what the container contains<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> This notion of container does not apply to containers such as *cups*, but must be seen as an abstraction over objects like boxes, bottles, the mouth, etc. As such, the notion of container used here cannot be seen as a preconceptual schema in the sense of Lakoff (1990) and Lakoff & Johnson (1980, 1999).

In these opening cases the path to the contents of the object is initially closed by something which is part of the object itself. By opening it, this barrier is removed, leading to a path to the contents of the object in question.

### 2.5.2 Case 2: Path to Y (by removing barrier)

The description for *open* given above in case 1, ‘creating of path through Y to (part of) Y’ applies to opening containers such as boxes or bottles, but does not apply equally well to cases of opening things such as books. If we want to use this description for such cases, we cannot interpret the idea of making a path as referring to an act where some kind of hole or opening is made in some container-like object. In the position where the book is closed, it is not possible to see the contents of the book; in other words, no visual contact is possible with the written part of the book. Objects like books are made such that the contents of the book, i.e. the written part, can be uncovered. In contrast to the container cases, this can be done *without* making a hole in it, for example by unrolling it (in the case of the Torah), or by taking the cover away (in the case of conventional books).

It might be argued that also in these cases one should speak of a ‘container’. A book would then be seen as a container of information (viz. the contents of the book). This means that the term ‘container’ is broadened such that there is abstraction from particular physical properties of objects such as boxes, etc. Indeed, it can be argued that in the case of ‘opening books’ the idea of containment occurs in a weakened form. I find it hard, however, to give a definition for such a broad term that does justice to properties of typical containers such as boxes, which have an interior, into which you can put something. Furthermore, in such a broad definition the resemblance between books and things that are similar to books under particular perspectives, such as umbrellas, is not expressed. Both umbrellas and books can be seen as things that cannot function in a closed position because they are folded, covered, or wrapped up. This is a feature which is shared by both objects, in contrast to the feature of containment, which can be said to be part of the conceptualization of a book in a weakened form, but which is not part of the conceptualization of an umbrella. In the closed position, the umbrella is wrapped up or folded such that parts of the object are not visible. By opening the umbrella, the ‘interior’ of the umbrella is made visible. It seems that the similarity between opening an umbrella and other opening cases such as

opening a book or opening a box is basically perceptual, since the creation of a path in the case of an umbrella has nothing to do with the idea of containment.<sup>13</sup>

In order to take account of such uses, the description of *open* given above has to be changed, that is made more abstract, such that there is abstraction from some of the specific features of boxes etc. This can be done by backgrounding the feature of 'making a path through Y' from the description:

*X opens Y (Y = book (also mouth, box, etc.) ) =<sub>def</sub>*  
X creates a path to (part of) Y

where:

There exists a path to Y if some kind of contact (physical, visual) is possible with Y

Note that this description presupposes that in the situation before the object Y is opened, that is when the object is closed, the path to Y is blocked in some way, or does not exist. This blocking may be that the object is covered (in the case of a book, where part of the book itself, viz. the cover, blocks the path to the pages of the book); in other cases the making of a path may have a different character. Consider for example the following sentences where we find that 'roads' can be opened or closed to people:

- (4) On December 3, 1998, a gas line exploded one mile from Arches National Park in Moab. The road was **closed** in and out of town, leaving truck drivers stranded in Moab for approximately 48 hours.
- (5) On December 14, Israeli forces closed Satter Al-Gharbi road near Ganei Tal settlement after an Israeli soldier was attacked. Israeli soldiers prevented Palestinian citizens and wagons from entering the area. The road has not been **opened** since then.

Here, opening the road means making the road accessible to the public. In this case the 'making a path to Y' occurs without the feature 'making a path through Y'. Also note that in this case the object that blocks the road cannot be seen as part of the road (in contrast to cases like opening a book, box, bottle, etc., where it is part of the object itself that blocks the pathway).

---

<sup>13</sup> Note, however, that in terms of the feature 'making something accessible' the 'opening book cases' show more similarity to the typical 'opening container cases' than 'opening umbrella cases' do. This points to the fact that it is difficult to give clear-cut categorizations of different uses of *open*.

### 2.5.3 Case 3: Path through Y (to Z) or removing Y

Other opening situations to which the description above (for case 2) cannot be applied in a straightforward way are cases of opening objects like curtains, windows, doors, and bridges, but also barriers, as in the following sentence (where the whole situation is interpreted metaphorically):

- (6) Currently, the last two barriers are being **opened**. As in the electric industry, state regulations are allowing open access to the small commercial and residential retail consumer to choose suppliers and the recovery of stranded costs by local utilities.

In the case of these objects the path is not created *to* the object itself, but *through* the object to something that is covered or made inaccessible by the object in question (as in the case of opening curtains), or in other cases, a path is created by removing Y (as in the case of opening a door).<sup>14</sup> These cases can be described in the following way:

X *opens* Y (Y = curtain, window, bridge, etc.) =<sub>def</sub>  
 X creates a path to that which is blocked by Y by creating a path through Y, or by removing Y

Note that in these cases the feature of ‘path through the object Y’, which is part of the container cases is preserved, but the feature of ‘path to the object Y’ is absent: in this case the object Y blocks a path, which becomes unblocked.<sup>15</sup> It seems to me that uses like *opening the curtains* must be understood on the basis of cases like *opening the box*. Note that in this case there is a clear visual similarity between such cases; compare Figure 2.1.

In the case of containers the barrier that blocks the pathway to the contents of the container is part of the container itself. Making a pathway means making a hole or opening in the object in question, or removing the object. In the case of opening the curtains a similar hole is made in the object, but in this case the hole does not create a

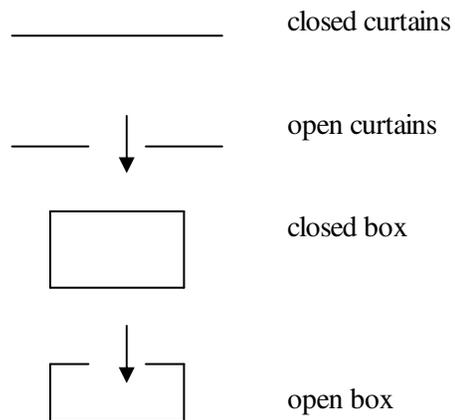
---

<sup>14</sup> In the case of ‘doors’ both the hole and that part which covers the hole could be seen as falling under the door concept. In such cases the difference between creating a path through Y, and removing Y is not clear.

<sup>15</sup> The *goal* of the action need not be that the object which is covered by Y is made accessible; it suffices that the creation of a pathway is always a result of the action in question. Take for example ‘opening your arms’. In this case the initial position of the arms is such that the chest is covered by the arms; by opening them the arms are removed from the chest and stretched out in horizontal position. The goal of this act need not be that the chest of a person is made visible (although it is necessarily the *result* of the action), but may be to facilitate the subject to embrace someone else.

path to the contents of the object, but to something that was initially blocked by the object.<sup>16</sup>

Figure 2.1



#### 2.5.4 Case 4: Metonymy

It is questionable whether the construction ‘*open Y*’ can be used in a metonymic way. I will, however, briefly mention cases where the process of metonymy plays a part. Consider the following sentence:

(7) In a while, he **opened** the gas and started cooking a simple dish – fried rice.<sup>17</sup>

This use of open in (7) could be analyzed as a case of metonymy because the creation of a path through the gas pipe by turning on the gas tap stands in a contiguity relation with the gas: by turning the tap some barrier is removed that blocks the gas from flowing. It may be argued that the metonymic transfer is facilitated by the fact that in

---

<sup>16</sup> Also note the visual similarity that can be perceived between opening your arms, opening an umbrella and a flower that opens.

<sup>17</sup> Since such sentences are not accepted by all speakers of English, I will give the source: [http://sciblc.nus.edu.sg/~shingo/shingo\\_fanfiction3.html](http://sciblc.nus.edu.sg/~shingo/shingo_fanfiction3.html)

the case of *opening the gas* a path *to* the gas is also created: the turning of the gas tap can be seen as the removing of some obstacle such that the gas can come out.

Note that in such cases it is often not clear how a sentence should be analyzed. Consider for example the following sentence:

- (8) I drove to Goodings market and bought a bottle of wine, some fruit, muffins, and cookies. As I mentioned earlier, this concept of ‘stocking up’ which (judging by what I read in guidebooks and the Internet) is frequently used is, in my opinion, not a good idea. We never **opened** the wine, the fruit wasn’t very good, the muffins got squished, and the cookies well, crumbled.

A sentence like this could be analyzed in different ways, viz. (i) as a case of metonymy of *open*, (ii) as a case of metonymy of *wine* (with the contiguity relation ‘container-content’) where *open* occurs in its basic use, and (iii) as a case of *open* where *open Y* means ‘create a pathway to Y’, without the feature of ‘making a path through Y’. In my opinion it is best to say that in these cases *open* has its basic meaning, but that the object of the verb must be interpreted metonymically.

#### 2.5.5 Case 5: Abstract cases

The verb *open* also occurs in cases where the object in question is a non-physical entity, and the verb *open* has a metaphorical character in the sense that the idea of ‘path to/through Y’ is interpreted metaphorically. This is the case for example with sentences where the object of the verb *open* is *mind* or people (*us*):

- (9) Modern and creative environment **opens** the mind for fresh new ideas and ensures the success of the seminar.
- (10) Reading is the most creative ingredient we can feed our mind. It refreshes, stimulates, and **opens** us to new ideas and experiences.

Cases like these can be analyzed well using the theory of metaphor outlined by Lakoff & Johnson (1980), where metaphor is described as experiencing and understanding one phenomenon in terms of another. In these cases the abstract entity of the mind is understood in terms of a container such as a box, which can contain things. The mind is seen as a container that can contain ideas, experiences etc. By opening the mind, new ideas are ‘let into the container’; that is, by opening the mind new ideas can develop. As Lakoff

& Johnson (1980) observe, metaphors are often part of a whole network of interrelated metaphors that all convey a particular way of conceptualizing an object or situation. Such is also the case with this metaphor, as can be illustrated with the following sentences, where the mind is conceptualized as a container:

- (11) **Open** your mind to faith, and the Lord will swiftly enter.
- (12) The most common and pervasive barrier to innovation is '*inside-the-box*' (my italics) thinking caused by limited perspectives and mindsets that are **closed** to new ideas.
- (13) A **closed** mind limits us all. It's a prison. No new ideas are allowed in. None find their way out.

It might be argued that the word *open* in these sentences is not different in meaning from the word *open* in container cases such as *open the box* because it is not the verb itself that is used differently but the object with which it is combined.

In other cases the verb *open* (or *closed*) is used with non-physical phenomena where the idea of a path *through* is absent, but the idea of a path *to* is present. These are cases where for example *open* occurs (often with the preposition *up*) with objects like a perspective, idea, or opportunity:

- (14) Internet now **opens** new perspectives for cooperative research.
- (15) Participation breeds more participation and **opens up** new ideas and new ways of worshipping.
- (16) For the adventurous and risk takers, this flexible market **opens up** tremendous opportunities to try new ideas and new business models.
- (17) There is no doubt that the ability to present your ideas orally to small groups and larger audiences can create opportunities that would be **closed** to you otherwise.

These uses of the verb *open* with non-physical objects like perspectives can be linked to the more concrete uses discussed earlier, because in both cases the feature 'creating a path *to*' plays a part. That is, in the physical cases the functional goal of making something accessible is related to the physical act of making something accessible, and in the non-physical cases the functional goal of making something accessible occurs without the physical act of making a path. It could be argued that in the case of opening

a perspective, the initial situation is presented as a situation where some ‘mental’ path to these phenomena is closed or blocked; put differently, the subject cannot *have* the opportunity or idea in question. By opening the object in question, a mental path to the phenomena in question is opened; that is, the subject can have that opportunity or idea.

Note that if one wishes to use the term ‘path’ in these cases, one has to broaden its use, such that it does not just refer to physical cases but also to abstract cases. To account for such cases, it could be argued, the meaning would have to be changed as follows:

X opens Y =<sub>def</sub>

X performs an action directed at Y, such that a path is created to (part of) Y

where:

*path to Y* = physical, visual or mental contact is possible with Y

A problem with a definition like this is that the feature ‘path’ is unclear. In order to understand this feature one has to refer to scenes from which this feature is abstracted. It seems to me that this feature can only be understood on the basis of the concrete, physical cases; this means that the abstract uses must be seen as secondary.

### 2.5.6 Case 6: Marking the beginning of phenomenon Y

The verb *open* is further used to mark the beginning of the existence of a phenomenon. In such cases the verb *open* can be used because the coming into being of the phenomenon also means creating a path to the phenomenon in question, such that the phenomenon becomes accessible; compare the following sentences:

- (18) The man **opened** the shop, and went in.
- (19) Our new shop has been **opened** to provide a custom designed on line shop for line dancers, the profits of which will be used to help us develop this website into a major resource for dancers.

In the first sentence the agent makes a physical path to the shop, by opening the door, such that people can go in. In the second sentence the idea of opening must be

interpreted in a more general sense as referring to the act of founding or setting up the shop, such that people can have access to the shop; compare:

- (20) This site has just been **opened** (March 24th), and all new members will therefore be able to compete for the available ranks on an equal scale.

In other cases the act of opening has a performative and symbolic character. This is the case in the following sentence for example:

- (21) Deaconess of Medical Center **Opens** Chest Pain Evaluation Unit.

In this case the deaconess performs a symbolic action, as such marking the beginning of the functioning of the object of the opening action. The event referred to here may have been done in a performative way, that is, the deaconess may have said: 'I hereby open the Chest Pain Evaluation Unit'. Note that in many cases the act of marking the beginning of some phenomenon and the physical act of opening may overlap. This is explicitly the case for example in the following Dutch sentence about a fully automatic toilet:

- (22) Het stadstoilet op het Zuideindigerpad werd vanmorgen niet **geopend**, maar **opende** zichzelf.  
'This morning, the city toilet on the Zuideneindigerpad was not opened, but opened itself.'

In other cases the idea of 'creating a path to Y' occurs in a weakened form. This the case is for example in sentences where the verb *open* can also be used to mark the beginning of an event such as a meeting, score, season, offensive, conversation, etc.:

- (23) The chairman **opened** the meeting.
- (24) Jurgen Dirx **opened** the score after 26 minutes with a header.
- (25) Double sweep as softball **opens** season with 2–2 mark – Cardinal wins clash with the Titans.
- (26) The battle was **opened** by Reille's division.
- (27) A simple friend **opens** a conversation with a full news bulletin on his life.

- (28) The Senior Choir **opened** the concert by singing ‘Children of the World’ and a Canadian song – ‘Four Strong Winds’.

In the case of these sentences the phenomenon that is opened (concert, score, match, attack, conversation, etc.) has a beginning and often an end. These are all phenomena that can be perceived as taking place in time, or evolving over time. The act of opening constitutes the existence of the object in question, and as such marks the beginning of the phenomenon in question. Such sentences with *open* often have the following structure: *X opened Y with Z*, where Z refers to the act that constitutes the beginning of the object of the verb, that is, the instrument of the act. Sentences like these can be linked to the other *open* cases because the beginning of the object makes mental access to the whole phenomenon in question possible. Thus the opening of a concert means that the rest of the concert can be experienced; the opening of a meeting means that people can participate in the meeting; the opening of the score means that the score can now freely change; the opening of a conversation means that we can participate in the conversation, etc. It seems that in order to use the word *open* to indicate the beginning of some event, it is necessary that the beginning is marked in some way. In some cases this means that the event referred to is done with a performative act, e.g. *I hereby open the meeting*. In other cases the performative character is not present, for example in the case of (24). In this case, however, the header can be seen as the act that marks the beginning of the event. The act of marking the beginning of a phenomenon can be seen as the feature ‘making a path to’, or ‘removing obstacles to create a path to’ in a weakened form. Weakening of features means that features are divided into subfeatures, and that some of these features are backgrounded.

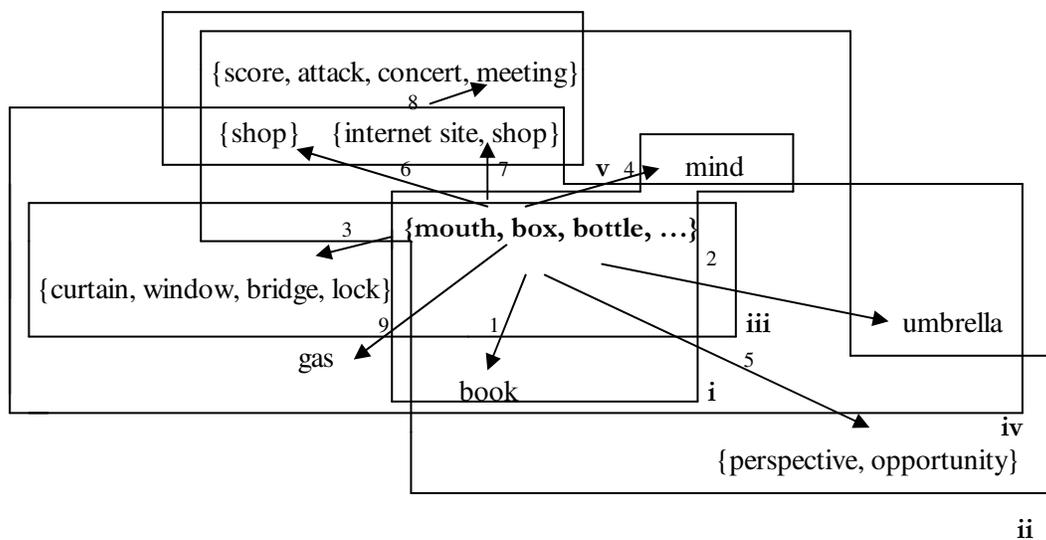
### 2.5.7 Conclusion: The meaning of *open*

Considering the different ways in which something can be opened, it seems that ‘opening something’ can best be viewed as a complex of different interrelated uses, with basic uses, and uses that can be analyzed in terms of extensions of basic uses. The basic uses are those where a physical path is created to something by removing a barrier that is part of the object in question, prototypically by creating a pathway through the object. In the case of these basic uses the features ‘creation of a path to Y’ and ‘creation of a path through Y, or removing part of Y’ are interdependent since the goal of creating a path *to* the interior of the container presupposes the existence of obstacles and, as such, the need to create a path *through* the container. Different uses of the verb

*open* can be seen as different extensions of such basic uses by means of strategies based on similarity and contiguity under perspectives such as ‘function’ and ‘form’. In the strategy of extension of use, metaphor and weakening of features play an important part.<sup>18</sup>

Some of these different uses are represented in Figure 2.2 in a highly simplified manner.

Figure 2.2



*Semantic relations*

1. Weakening of feature ‘containment’
2. Physical similarity (without feature ‘containment’)
3. Selection of feature ‘pathway through’, and physical similarity-relation to feature ‘path to’
4. Metaphor
5. Metaphor by selection of feature ‘pathway to’
6. Backgrounding of idea of containment, selection of idea ‘pathway to’, attributing feature ‘marking the beginning of Y with Z’

<sup>18</sup> It must be remarked that some authors, especially Lakoff (1990), Lakoff & Johnson (1980, 1999), use the term metaphor in a much broader way, including *any* strategy where analogy plays a part.

7. Weakening of feature 'pathway to'
8. Weakening of feature 'pathway to'
9. Metonymy (of verb meaning or object meaning)

*Presence of features*

- (i) Feature 'containment': {mouth, bottle, etc.}; weakened: {mind, book}
  - (ii) Feature 'Path to Y': {mouth, etc.}, {book}, {shop}, {internet site}; weakened: {perspective, score, etc.}
  - (iii) Feature 'Path through Y': {mouth, etc.}, {bridge, etc.}
  - (iv) Concrete-physical cases: {mouth, etc.}, {umbrella}, {bridge, etc.}, {book}, {shop};  
borderline case: {internet site}
  - (v) Feature 'marking the beginning of some phenomenon': {shop}, {internet site, etc.}, {score, etc.}
- 

Although it is possible to categorize the different uses of *open* as I have done above, it must be remarked that a categorization into different uses remains principally an idealization, and that other classifications may be possible as well. Firstly, uses can be classified differently, in relation to the criteria that are used in the classification, and the perspectives that are taken to view the different instances of opening something. Secondly, the features that can form the basis for classification of uses such as 'containment', 'pathway', 'barrier', etc., are not discrete and well defined, but have a flexible and subjective character. This implies that a categorization of the different uses of *open* has, at least to some extent, a subjective character. Note, furthermore, that since abstractness is a gradual phenomenon, it is often hard to draw the line between abstract cases and non-abstract cases. Take for example a situation like opening a computer program. In this case the creation of a path to the program must be identified with clicking on an icon, or typing of a code, to make the program available for use. It is hard to say whether this case must be seen as an abstract or non-abstract case.

Considering what I have said above, it seems that different uses of opening something can be distinguished, but no clear-cut boundaries can be drawn between different cases, and that the decision as to which cases must be seen as part of the same use depends on the perspective taken to view those cases. Furthermore, in the *understanding* of all uses of opening something, a part is played by features from basic uses, viz. 'creating a pathway to Y by removing a barrier'.

## **2.6 Further arguments for and against general meanings**

I have discussed the English verb *open* in some detail as a means to illustrate the structure of meaning in general. I have argued that although all the uses of the verb *open* may be said to have a feature in common, such as ‘creation of a pathway’, the theoretical interpretation of this feature remains problematic. It is not clear for example whether this description can be seen as the meaning of the verb *open* or not. In this section I will discuss the following (interrelated) counter-arguments to the proposition that there is something like *the* general meaning of words like *open*, and say something about the status of general meanings in a broader sense:

- (i) There is little empirical linguistic and psychological evidence that the highest abstraction can be seen as a necessary and sufficient condition for the correct use of a form.
- (ii) Meanings cannot be treated as definitions from which the correct use of a form can be *predicted*. This view of meaning does not take account of the flexibility that is inherent to conceptualization, and the fact that the different interpretations of a concept such as *open* are conventionally based uses that have to be learned by the language user.
- (iii) The general meaning cannot account for the fact that some uses of *open* have a stronger internal similarity than others, and that in some cases different usage types can be distinguished.
- (iv) Not all uses of a word can be accounted for by means of abstraction from different uses, because specific features of particular uses that are not part of some abstraction play an important part in meaning extension.
- (v) The difference between what is called ‘literal’ or general meaning and derived meaning is not clear in all cases. It may be that in some cases the relation between the basic uses of a form and the derived meaning is not transparent; in such cases the relation between the derived meaning and the general meaning may be lost.

I will discuss these arguments in more detail below.

### 2.6.1 Lack of empirical success and psychological evidence

A first objection to the idea of general meanings is that most linguists who advocate the one-form-one-meaning principle have considerable difficulty actually defining the general meaning of a form. This is also the case with Searle, who does not formulate the general meaning of the verb *open*, although he claims that “we have no difficulty grasping (...) literal meanings” (1991: 147). Another related shortcoming is that normally speaking, if a linguist defines a general meaning, it is usually so abstract that it is not clear how it can be *interpreted* or used by the language user. In other words, the process of abstraction from different uses and the process of interpreting of the abstract meaning remain unexplained in most monosemous accounts of meaning.

One would expect that if people make use of a general meaning of the verb *open*, or if this meaning plays a part in the linguistic system, it would not be difficult to define it. Of course, the criticism given here is not fundamental: the fact that it is difficult to define general meanings and the process of interpreting of these meanings cannot be seen as evidence *per se* that general meanings do not exist. It could be argued that the phenomenon of language is in general a difficult phenomenon that is hard to describe, especially because language is described in terms of language itself.

Another problem with general meanings as postulated by linguists is that they are often so abstract that they describe not only the form in question, but also oppositional forms. Take for example the description for the basic meaning of *break* given by Goddard (1999: 133), a scholar working within the framework of Wierzbicka: “X broke Y = X did something to Y; because of this, something happened to Y at this time; because of this, after this Y was not one thing any more”.<sup>19</sup> This description does not tell us the difference between ‘breaking’, ‘cutting’, and ‘tearing apart’. This is problematic if we want to give an adequate description of the different concepts in the linguistic structure. The condition that descriptions of the meaning of a form must apply to this one form only (and not to oppositional forms) needs some further elaboration.

Firstly, it is important to distinguish *necessary* features from *accidental* features of forms. In my analysis of the imperative, for example, I will argue that the feature of directivity is a necessary feature of the imperative, and not of oppositional forms such

---

<sup>19</sup> In the framework advocated by Wierzbicka concepts are described in terms of so-called universal primes, that is, a set of concepts that are basic to human conceptualization in general, and that can be seen as the building blocks of all other concepts. The inherent vagueness of the description, as I see it, is also related to the restriction of the metalanguage to a limited set of universal concepts.

as the infinitive. In the case of the infinitive the feature of directivity is an interpretation or accidental feature conditioned by the context in which the infinitive occurs, and not part of the meaning of the form; in other words, it is an interpretation. As I will explain below, the different status of the feature 'directivity' in these cases also implies that the directive use of the imperative differs in character from the directive use of the infinitive.

Secondly, whether a description of the meaning of some form is underspecified in the sense that it does not differentiate between the use of the form in question, and oppositional forms, also depends on the information provided by the context in which the utterance occurs. As such, underspecification is to some extent a relative concept. In the context of the concept 'stone', Goddard's above description of the word *break* may suffice, because the normal way in which a stone is made into pieces is normally described with the verb *break*, and not with forms like *cut* or *tear apart*. This does not mean, however, that the description given by Goddard is sufficient for all cases, since in principle it is possible to say something like *cut the stone*. In order to understand this utterance it is necessary to know that cutting is done with a knife or similar tool, leading to a different way of making the object in question into pieces, whereas breaking is done without such an instrument.

Thirdly, the condition that descriptions of meaning must differentiate between oppositional forms does not mean that there are no features shared by different forms, but rather that the whole of features differs from form to form. I will illustrate this with an example. Let us imagine that we define the meaning of the word *lopen* ('walk') in Dutch as 'moving by taking steps in such and such a manner'.<sup>20</sup> It could be argued that this is not an accurate description since it can also apply to *dansen* ('dance'): part of a dance is usually that people move in this specific way. I do not, however, think that this is a valid argument. Apart from the fact that it is questionable whether the movement expressed by *lopen* is a necessary feature of dancing, the movement expressed by *lopen* always occurs in combination with, and in relation to other features (such as moving on music, moving in patterns, moving for pleasure etc.). As such, the description of *lopen* may be the description of an isolated satisfaction situation of a dance event, but never of the complex of features associated with the dance event. Consequently, features cannot be treated as individual information units, but always occur in relation to other features, that is, they occur in Gestalts.

---

<sup>20</sup> The correct description must ultimately use descriptions from biology and physiology such that the difference between *lopen* and *rennen* ('run') is made clear, but I will neglect this here.

The skepticism concerning the idea that meanings can be seen as necessary and sufficient conditions for the correct use of a form is supported up by evidence from psychology, especially that provided by Rosch (1973, 1978). Rosch showed that in the studied cases similarity to a so-called prototype of a category is sufficient for classification into that category, if and only if similarity to the prototypes of the adjacent categories is lower. The prototype can be defined in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions, whereas the other instances of the category only share some of these features.<sup>21</sup> The occurrence of prototypical effects can be seen as the result of a strategy of humans to group different phenomena together under a limited set of words. As noted by many authors (e.g. Lakoff, 1990; Bartsch, 1998), the occurrence of prototype effects seems to be a natural consequence of the fact that our conceptualization cannot mirror the world in a one-to-one fashion. Note, however, that the evidence provided by Rosch (1973, 1978) cannot be seen as final proof against the idea of general meanings.

Firstly, it is not clear whether, or to what extent these so-called prototype effects play a part in *every* case of word-meaning, and whether the phenomena grouped under the label 'prototype' are in all respects similar, in the sense that the observed effects actually show that no general meaning exists. The fact that in the case of the category 'birds' prototypical effects play a part, does not imply that prototypes play a part in every case of word-meaning. It can be expected, for example, that in the case of natural kind categories like 'birds', which can be seen as biological, partly scientific categories, the categorization may be different in character than in the case of other concepts, for example in the case of grammatical meaning. Linguists use the term prototypes for both (i) cases where the prototype effect is based on psychological evidence, and where this psychological evidence can be reconstructed on the basis of the presence or absence of particular features of the objects of categorization, and (ii) cases where the prototype effect is based on linguistic reconstruction of features only.<sup>22</sup> It is not clear whether these different phenomena can be seen as similar in all respects.

---

<sup>21</sup> In my view the feature 'feathers' is a feature that occurs *only* with birds, and with *all* birds (except when they have just been born). If this feature could be adequately defined, this would mean that a necessary and sufficient condition could be given for the category bird, viz. 'an animal that has feathers'. I think, however, that such a definition does not do justice to the fact that other features play a much more important role in our experience of birds, such as the ability to lay eggs, the presence of wings, and the ability to fly. In the case of the category bird, the prototype theory gives a psychologically adequate description of the way in which human conceptualization works.

<sup>22</sup> Some linguists, such as Givón (1995: 113), use the term 'prototype' for theoretical notions that are based on cross-linguistic evidence.

Secondly, it is not clear how and to what extent the prototype effects actually say something about the structure of the linguistic system. Note that prototype effects also occur in the case of concepts where no prototype structure can be reconstructed on the basis of features (e.g. the discrete concept 'odd numbers', where some odd numbers are rated to be more odd than others; Armstrong et al., 1983). This led Armstrong et al. (1983: 284) to conclude that the fact that informant responses are often graded is probably "a fact about something other than the structure of concepts". It is thus not clear how and to what extent the prototype effects observed in psychological tests actually say something about the structure of the linguistic system. I do not think that prototype organization implies per se that for the conceptualization of the language user there are central and non-central members. Judgments about centrality are judgments about perceived ontological phenomena, but do not always say something about the conceptual status of the concepts about which these judgments are made. Consider for example the use of the perfective aspect in Russian. It can be observed that some uses of the perfective aspect are more basic, whereas others are more peripheral. The basic uses are those where the conceptual status 'mirrors' the ontological status. More specifically, the basic uses are those that refer to actions that are clearly bounded. The peripheral uses are those where the conceptual status ('bounded') does not 'mirror' the ontological status (the same events could also be conceptualized as non-bounded). More specifically, the peripheral uses are those that refer to actions that are not clearly bounded, but which are *presented as being bounded*. It may be that in the process of concept formation the peripheral uses are constructed by analogy with the basic uses. This does not imply, however, that for the language user the peripheral uses have a different conceptual status than the basic ones. It may be that for the language user or, put differently, for the linguistic system, there are just bounded, and non-bounded actions.

### **2.6.2 Meanings are not definitions**

A second weak point of many monosemous analyses is that general meanings are treated as definitions from which the correct uses of a form can be predicted. This view of meaning, however, does not take account of the inherently flexible nature of the process of conceptualization and interpretation, and the fact that uses of a word are *conventional*, that is, the meaning of a word like *open* is an abstraction from different conventionally based uses, that is, uses that have to be learned by the language user at some point in the process of learning the language.

A weak point of models where meanings are seen as definitions is that abstractions are treated as information units that are totally separated from the contexts in which these meanings occur. It can be argued, however, that the different satisfaction situations that form the basis for a concept always play a part in the case of meanings, since without these situations the abstraction can get no interpretation. Meanings are not like definitions we have in our head, but must be seen as abstractions, formulated by linguists, from the different satisfaction situations on which a concept is based. In order to *understand* abstract definitions of general meanings, one has to refer to the scenes from which these general meanings are abstracted. The idea that in order to be able to interpret the meaning of some form, one has to know the satisfaction situations on which the meaning was based, implies that it is not necessary for language users to compute what *open a door* means by applying some abstract general meaning of the verb *open* to the meaning of *a door*, every time they are confronted with this expression. The meaning of the verb *open* is based on all the different experiences of opening something with which the language user is confronted; these experiences remain part of the knowledge of the language user. An example of this was illustrated by the use of the word *eat*. It is a norm of language that we can say *eat soup* in particular contexts, but the language user does not have to know the reconstruction made by the linguist as to *why* it is possible to use *eat* in the case of soup. For him it suffices to know all the different ways in which a word can be used.

Of course, it may be argued that once the concept has been formed on the basis of clear examples, it can be applied to new cases that are judged to be similar to the known examples. However, whether a scene is perceived as similar to another scene is partly a subjective matter, and it is partly a matter of convention how the linguistic system categorizes different scenes. This can be illustrated with the word ‘open’ in English and Russian. The general meaning of the Russian verb *otkryvat’* (‘open’) and the English verb *open* may very well be the same. Most uses of the two verbs are similar, in both languages the verb can be used with respect to boxes, mouths, windows, books, umbrellas, etc. Nevertheless, in some cases the verb *otkryvat’* can be used in contexts where English uses another word. This is the case for example with sentences where the verb *otkryvat’* is used in the meaning of ‘uncovering’ or ‘discovering’:

- (29) Uvidev Nexljudova, ona podnjala vual’, **otkryla** ochen’ milovidnoe lico s blestjashchimi glazami i vosprosil’no vzgjanula na nego.  
 ‘After she saw Nexljudov, she lifted her voile, *uncovering* her very pretty face and shining eyes, and looked at him as if she wanted to ask him something.’

- (30) Ty xochesh', chtoby ja **otkryla** tebe svoju slabost'!  
'You want me to *show* you my weakness!'

The differences in use may be partly due to the different oppositional forms in the different linguistic structures, and also partly due to 'coincidental' conventions. Although regularities can often be perceived in the case of such differences – both (29) and (30) can be described as cases where a cover is taken away – it seems impossible to capture these facts in something like a general meaning. In both the case of *otkryvat'* and the case of *open* the general meaning must be something like 'make something accessible'. This meaning, however, is not specific enough to define which uses are correct sentences in the language in question, and which uses are not. On the basis of this description one would expect that it would be possible to say *open America* (meaning 'discover America'), but in English the conventional way to refer to the situation in question is different. Such facts just have to be learned by the language users. Understanding works with cognitive abilities such as perceiving similarity and analogy, whereas conventions and norms can be seen as restrictions on such perceived similarities. In some cases such conventions can partly be motivated by the different linguistic structures in which the forms occur. The decision to conceptualize a scene with a particular concept may be modeled as the choosing of the *optimal* concept for the scene in question. The difference in oppositional *basic* forms implies that the conceptualization of peripheral forms may differ from structure to structure. Although one can try to find systematizations for such norms, it is impossible to predict which situations will satisfy an expression and which not; no 'objective' ontological principles can be given for such different conceptualizations.<sup>23</sup>

Langacker (1999) argues against the idea that interpretations have a different status from meanings by pointing to the fact that interpretations inferred by pragmatic inference are conventional and must be learned. Although I agree with Langacker that in some cases no clear boundaries can be drawn between meaning and interpretation, I would like to stress here that the fact that language users have to *learn* the different possibilities of use of a word does not imply that each of these possibilities must be

---

<sup>23</sup> Another interesting example is the difference between the words *run* and *walk* and their Dutch counterparts. In English the word *run* is used both for the movement of humans ('walk fast') and for the movement of the mechanism of a machine ('function'): *The man runs; the machine runs well*. The word *walk* is used for humans only (*\*The machine walks well*). In Dutch we find that *rennen* ('walk fast') is used for humans only, and not for machines (*\*De machine rent goed*); for machines the word *lopen* ('walk', 'go') can be used: *de machine loopt goed*.

seen as a different meaning of a word. I will give an example of this. As I will argue below, the meaning of both the Russian and the Dutch infinitive can be defined as ‘situation type’. This meaning reflects the basic and general capacity to categorize situations as *types*. Although the meaning of the Dutch and the Russian infinitive may be the same, the specific *use* of the infinitive differs in the two languages. Such differences can in some cases be attributed to different oppositional forms, but in other cases it seems impossible to give a further explanation for them. Theoretically one could in such a case (i) define different meanings for the different infinitives, or (ii) treat the different uses as meanings. In my opinion, however, it is best to see both infinitives as having the same *basic* meaning, viz. situation type. This meaning corresponds to a basic strategy, viz. the strategy to see sets of situations of application of a term as types. On the basis of this meaning, it is possible to understand the different uses. Such different uses have to be learned, that is, they are conventional, but the term means the same in all the uses. In contrast to, for example the verb *open*, understanding the infinitive does not presuppose the capacity to select and background features under contexts. As such, the description ‘situation type’ suffices as the meaning of the infinitive.

### 2.6.3 The existence of usage types

A third weak point in the assumption of a general meaning of *open* is that some configurations of use of *open* seem to have a stronger internal similarity than others. This seems to point at a situation where there is not something like *the* general meaning of *open* but rather different related meanings of *open* that can have more or less similarity to each other, depending on the perspective that is taken to view them. In this respect it is interesting to look at the use of ellipse with conjunction or disjunction:

- (a) Tom opened the door and the window.
- (b) ? Tom opened his eyes and the door.

Note that the unacceptability of (b) cannot solely be attributed to pragmatic factors, because it is perfectly normal to imagine a situation where one first opens one’s eyes, and then the door. It could be argued then that the unacceptability of (b) is not so much due to a difference in *similarity* between the two *opening* events, but more to the fact that for the language user ‘opening doors’ and ‘opening windows’ occur in the same *functional-semantic* domain. This means that both events can be described as

'opening parts of the house', whereas finding a hypernym for 'opening doors' and 'opening eyes' is much more difficult. It may be that such factors play a part in the acceptability of ellipse. However, they just show how different these two opening situations are. I think that monosemous approaches often fail to recognize the perceived differences between the different uses of a form.<sup>24</sup>

The psychological literature also contains evidence that some configurations of use of a word may have a stronger internal similarity than others. Such evidence is provided for example by the tests conducted by Sandra & Rice (1995) on prepositions. Sandra & Rice point out that analyses which come up with polysemous networks are characterized by a number of weaknesses: (i) a lack of clear methodological principles for the identification of distinct usage types; (ii) an overly wide range of representational variants of network models; (iii) a vagueness about whether the usage types correspond to semantic distinctions or to referential distinctions (different contextualizations of a single meaning); and (iv) an uncertainty about what the correct cognitive interpretation of the network should be.

In their article they present a number of experiments that address the relationship between the linguistic distinctions in lexical networks and the distinctions in the mental representation of native speakers. In their experiments native speakers of English are asked to do different tasks, among them sorting prepositions and making judgments of similarity about these prepositions. Sandra & Rice state that the outcomes of these tests show that the strong monosemy position is untenable, because language users clearly distinguish between fairly general usage types and because there is evidence that they even make distinctions at a more specific level as well.

The assumption underlying the tests of Sandra & Rice is that the subjects are guided in their sorting behavior by the distinctions that are made on the level of mental representation. They claim that if the strong monosemy thesis were true, the subjects would not be able to do the sorting experiment, for the simple reasons that they are being asked to make distinctions that they do not make at the level of mental representation. Although the conclusion that they draw may be valid, there are in my opinion a number of reasons for regarding the validity of the assumption as questionable.

Firstly, it may be that language users are able to make distinctions on the level of interpretation (meaning embedded in a particular context) as well as being able to

---

<sup>24</sup> See also my criticism on Ebeling (1956) in section 3.1. Ebeling's description of the Russian imperative fails to explain why language users tend to see more similarity between the directive imperative and the necessitive imperative, than between the directive imperative and the conditional imperative

abstract from these different uses. Language users may for example perceive physical similarities between opening a door and opening the window, but still perceive functional similarity between different opening events such as opening doors, windows and meetings.

Secondly, norms are not the same as systematizations of and behind the norm. This means that the reconstruction of the linguist does not have to be the same as the intuition of the language user. Furthermore, in the case of grammatical meaning such as the imperative or the infinitive, judgments of language users about the *meaning* of forms are in fact very often judgments about the *functions* of forms. Two *forms* share (part of) the same function if they share their closest hypernym, in other words, they can be seen as having the same function when they can be seen as oppositional forms. This implies that one form may have different functions, because the different uses of the form may be paraphrased with different oppositional forms. Meanings, however, must be seen as abstractions from such different functions of one word. Such meanings mostly have a very abstract character, and must be seen as reconstructions of the linguist. As such, they are not part of the knowledge of the language user. Sorting tests (e.g. Muravickaja, 1973, for the Russian imperative), seem to imply that language users tend to sort on the basis of *function* rather than on the basis of meaning. This means that different forms with similar functions are more similar for the language user than the different uses of one and the same form. The way in which language users group uses of a form does not imply per se that this is also the way in which the meanings of uses of this form are related to one another. For language users it is important to know *what you can do* with words, and not *how it is possible* that you can do things with words.<sup>25</sup> The abstract nature of meanings is such that they can often not be seen as part of the norms of language users.

Thirdly, the fact that there is nothing like the highest abstraction that can be seen as a necessary and sufficient condition for the correct use of a form does not mean that there is something like *distinctive usage types*. In many cases the different uses of a form cannot be *strictly* classified into different usage types, because the borders between the different types are fluid. This means that some uses can fall under two different usage types. The existence of *fuzzy borders* between usage types points at the flexibility of taking perspectives in the case of conceptualization, and refutes the idea that concepts can be seen as definitions.

---

<sup>25</sup> Note that this criticism does not directly concern the test of Sandra & Rice (1995); it must be seen as a more general criticism on the hypothesis that meaning directly reflects the mental processes of language users.

#### **2.6.4 General meanings abstract from features that play a part in meaning extension**

A fourth weak point in the argumentation for the general meaning of some word is that marginal cases of a word sometimes cannot be seen as derived from some highest abstraction, but must be seen as derived from a lower abstractional level.

An important point made by Searle is that language users have the ability to abstract from uses. This ability enables them to group different phenomena together on the basis of some shared feature. It is, however, questionable whether such abstractions always contain all the information relevant for the understanding of certain uses of a concept. This is exemplified by the verb *eat* given above. If one wishes to explain the occurrence of *eat soup*, one has to take account of features that occur in the case of particular *eat* cases, viz. those cases where tools are used to eat. This feature cannot, however, be part of some highest abstraction, because in many *eat* cases no such tools are used, for example *eat an apple*. Put differently: if we only proceed from some highest abstraction, we lose some important information that we need in order to explain some specific uses of a form. Note that this is not an argument for rejecting general meanings per se. It only means that also in the case of general meanings, the information contained on lower abstractional levels may remain relevant.

#### **2.6.5 Metaphor and metonymy**

A fifth weak point in the idea of the general meaning of *open* is that *metaphoric* and *metonymic* extensions of meaning create polysemy, such that no necessary and sufficient conditions can be given for a word. Searle accounts for this by saying that such uses in fact have the same meaning as literal cases, but that they are used in a different way. It is, however, often not clear which uses must be seen as 'adjustments', which uses must be seen as 'specifications', and which uses must be seen as separate meanings (see section 2.4). Furthermore, many linguists have argued and demonstrated that family resemblance structures disturb the transitivity relation between meanings in the polysemous complex.

The idea of *metaphoric* and *metonymic* extensions creating polysemy can be exemplified by the use of the word *eat* in *Jealousy was eating him up*. This particular use of the word *eat* is usually classified in the literature as *metaphorical* use, in contrast to the use of the word *eat* in sentences like *John ate an apple*, where *eat* is said to function in its literal sense. The

difference between literal and non-literal use of a form is based on the linguistic intuition that some uses are more 'basic' and 'literal' whereas others seem to be 'non-literal' and 'derived from the basic use'. This intuition is the basis for Searle's description of metaphor as a case where the speaker's utterance meaning and the sentence meaning do not coincide.

Although the notion of metaphor is based on linguistic intuition, and plays an important part in many descriptions of language and concept formation, most scholars fail to provide a description of metaphor that allows metaphorical use to be distinguished from non-metaphorical use. The difficulty in describing what constitutes metaphorical use and what constitutes literal use seems to result from the fact that the distinction itself is not a clear-cut phenomenon. That it is often hard to draw a line between metaphorical use and non-metaphorical use can also be illustrated with the example used by Searle himself, viz. the verb to *open*:

- a. John opened the bottle.
- b. John opened the book.
- c. John opened the Torah.
- d. The surgeon opened the heart of the patient.
- e. John opened the computer program.
- f. John opened the meeting.
- g. The soldiers opened fire.
- h. John opened her cold heart by saying 'I love you'.
- i. John opened the umbrella.

Which uses of the word *open* must be seen as metaphorical and why?

If we follow Searle's line of thought, there must be something like a literal meaning of the verb *open*, and there can be non-literal uses, such as metaphorical uses, that are derived from this literal meaning. As I mentioned before, Searle describes metaphorical use as that use where the sentence meaning cannot be equated with the utterance meaning. If this description is taken literally, it is difficult to apply because it presupposes that the sentence meaning, or *literal* meaning is clear. According to Searle, the literal meaning is that meaning which defines all cases of *open*, except the derived cases such as the metaphorical uses. This, of course, is a circular strategy, because it helps us to find the metaphorical meaning by means of the literal meaning, whereas the

literal meaning can only be defined if one knows what the literal meaning is. So what must be seen as the literal meaning of the verb *open*?<sup>26</sup>

If the literal meaning must be identified with the general meaning (invariant, highest abstraction), the physical action that constitutes the act of ‘opening’ cannot be seen as an essential part of this meaning, which is underlined by the different ways in which something can be opened. It seems that what these uses have in common is the functional act of making something accessible, that is, making physical, visual or mental contact possible. It is precisely the way in which something is made accessible that differs from case to case. In (a–d) the activity is directed at some physical object, which is not the case in (f–h), where the activity is directed at a mental or social object; (e) can be seen as a borderline case because a computer program can be seen both as physical object and as a non-physical object. Note that there is also a difference between (f,g) and (h) because (h) in principle allows for an interpretation where some surgeon-magician physically opens the heart of the patient by saying the magic words ‘I love you’; such an interpretation is not available for (f) because ‘a meeting’ cannot be conceptualized as a physical object. This explains why the discrepancy between the ‘physical’ interpretation and the non-physical meaning is more clearly felt in (h) than in (f). It is precisely this feeling of ‘discrepancy’ that (h) is felt as metaphorical, but (f) less so, or not at all, although both are abstract cases.

As I said, Searle describes metaphorical use as a use where the sentence meaning cannot be equated with the utterance meaning. This description means that metaphor always implies some kind of semantic discrepancy between a basic or literal meaning and a derived meaning. Note that this description only applies to *non-conventionalized* metaphorical use of *open* and not to *conventional* metaphorical use. It could be argued that this description of metaphor is problematic because it implies that the new conventionalised metaphoric use falls under the literal meaning of the concept *open*; but if the metaphorical use does not fall under the core of all the *open* cases, how can it be possible that conventionalization changes the meaning to such an extent that it becomes part of the semantic core of the verb? Searle cannot account for cases where the relation between some basic use of a word and a derived use is no longer transparent. This is the case for example with the narrative use of the Russian

---

<sup>26</sup> Take for example Wierzbicka (1996: 158–159), who claims that Wittgenstein’s analysis of the word *game* in terms of family resemblances is wrong, and offers her own analysis of the word *game*. Wierzbicka, however, runs into the same problems as Searle, as she claims that her description only accounts for the basic uses of *game*, without showing us a way to distinguish playful extensions from the basic meaning of a word, other than that playful extensions do not fall under the basic concept.

imperative. Although a relation between this use and the other imperative uses can be reconstructed, this relation is not transparent anymore to the extent that the relation plays no part in the meaning of the narrative imperative. Such a phenomenon can be seen as diachronic change that influences the synchronic linguistic system.

Furthermore, it is not clear how Searle accounts for cases with a so-called family resemblance structure. Polysemous complexes with a family resemblance structure are cases where we have a metaphoric extension from a use that was already the result of a metaphoric extension, such that use A shares features with use B, and use B with use C, but uses A and C have no features in common that they do not share with oppositional uses. Such family resemblance structures arise by changing subperspectives change, while retaining the main perspective. Of course, it could be argued that it is an empirical issue whether such cases actually exist. There is no a priori reason why family resemblance structures should exist or not exist in language. Different linguists have, however, pointed at such family resemblance structures in language (e.g. Wittgenstein for the word *Spiel* (1984), Bartsch for the word *run* (1984)).

I would like to note, however, that in my opinion such structures are probably the exception, rather than the rule in language studied as a *synchronic* system. This can be motivated pragmatically by the fact that they weaken the communicative stability of the linguistic system: infinite regression of meaning transfer is of no use for communication. To express an experience, the optimal concept is chosen from the range of available concepts in the linguistic structure. This means that similarity of the scene expressed by X to (one of) the other concepts expressed by X is bigger than the similarity to (one of) the concepts expressed by oppositional form Y. Optimality can therefore often be defined in terms of the *specific semantic distribution* of a term (see Bartsch, 1998). A restriction on the extension of the range of uses of a word is that the selection made by the new perspective has to be part of the specific semantic characteristic distribution of a term, that is, the specific features of the referent which distinguishes it from others. To give a specific example: the metaphor *John is a wolf* does not refer to the fact that John has fur, since fur is not a characteristic of wolves that distinguishes them from other animals. As such, *wolf* is not the optimal concept to express that John has fur. It must be remarked, however, that optimality is not a clearly defined notion. In some cases it is therefore difficult to motivate why a particular convention is the case.

Optimality must further be defined in terms of avoidance of ambiguity. If differences in scene are relevant for the language user, the context must differentiate between such uses. This is the case for example with *John runs*, and *the machine runs*,

where the context, the subject of the verb, provides enough information to choose the right interpretation. Note also that in order to *understand* a meaning, it does not have to contain a necessary feature that stands in opposition to other uses. To give an example, I think it is quite possible to understand *the machine runs, the river runs, the arrow runs, the road runs*, etc. on the basis of *John runs*, where the feature of ‘ongoing movement’ plays a part in some way or another, notwithstanding the fact that a feature like ‘ongoing movement’ is rather underspecified since it does not specify what kind of movement is at issue (movement with legs, movement of a machine, etc.). However, on the basis of our knowledge of rivers, machines, roads, and general principles of metonymy, metaphor, and resultative perception (see Matsumoto, 1996), all these uses can be interpreted. As such, it may be that the feature ‘ongoing movement’ is necessary to understand the word *run*; it ensures a minimal transitivity between the different uses. This does not mean that in all cases of the word *run* the subject of *run* itself moves: it may also be that the use is understood on the basis of the idea of movement (for example in the case of metonymy).<sup>27</sup> The relevance of the feature of ongoing movement can be illustrated with the following example:

- a. The machine runs well. → ‘functions’
- b. The factory runs well. → ‘functions’
- c. ?The door runs well. → ‘functions’
- d. ?The boomerang runs well → ‘functions’

For (a): The machine (or its internal mechanism) functions by moving. For (b): the factory can be seen as a machine that moves (things are going on), by moving it functions. For (c): the functioning of the door is in regular cases not conceptualized as based on ongoing movement. For (d): The functioning of the boomerang is not conceptualized as based on ongoing movement. Polysemy-based analyses often fail to point at such shared features, and regularities.<sup>28</sup> This is sometimes because they do not make an adequate distinction between the actual extension of words, and the way we conceptualize things.

Even in models where family resemblance structures or diachronic changes effecting the synchronic system are accepted, it seems that whether one experiences a difference between the literal meaning, that is the meaning based on the basic uses of a concept, and the utterance meaning is at least partially subjective. For some language

---

<sup>27</sup> This also accounts for *the fence runs from A to B*, since this use can be understood on the basis of resultative perception.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Wierzbicka (1996), who convincingly argues against the existence of family resemblances in language.

users, *open* in *opening a meeting* may be understood and experienced in terms of *open* as it occurs in sentences such as *open the book*, for others the two uses may be considered to be of the same kind, while others may treat them as separate concepts. Searle does not take such issues into account.

For my description of the linguistic data I would like to draw the conclusion that the *general* meaning and *literal* meaning must be kept apart. The general meaning can be seen as the highest abstraction or invariant, which may stand in opposition to other forms used for similar purposes, but which, in most cases, cannot be seen as a necessary and sufficient condition for the correct use of a form. The general meaning can also apply to clearly metaphorical cases (e.g. in the case of *open someone's heart* or *open the ranks* the notion of making something accessible plays a part in the metaphorical interpretation) but this is not necessarily the case (e.g. in the case of *jealousy is eating him up*, the feature of 'taking nurture' does not play a part in any literal sense). I will use the term 'literal meaning' for that meaning from which a metaphorical meaning is derived. This meaning is not an abstraction from all the different uses, but can be seen as a specific type of use. To give an example, the phrases *opening someone's heart* and *opening the ranks* can, in principle, be understood in two different ways, namely in the literal sense (as in *the surgeon opens someone's heart*; *the general opens the ranks*) or in a metaphorical way (as in *he opened her cold heart by saying I love you*; *the ranks were opened for new members*). Note that the pragmatic description that Searle gives for metaphor is in my view correct; the incorrect element of his viewpoint is that he equates literal meaning with general meaning.

## 2.7 Conclusion

In this chapter I have set out the theoretical framework that I will use for the analyses to be presented in the following chapters, and I have informally touched upon some of the issues that play a part in the semantic analysis.

I have argued that meanings stated by linguists cannot be seen as definition-like representations from which the correct uses of a form can be predicted. Meanings are *intersubjective* mental reconstructions of properties and regularities in the world, expressed by forms occurring in the structure of oppositions. Meaning formation can be seen as structuring of sets of data by ordering relationships based on judgements of similarity (identity) and difference, especially opposition or contrast, under perspectives. As similarity is to some extent a subjective notion, the meaning (definition) of an expression *e* can never *predict* which situations satisfy *e*. From a set of examples stability

can be predicted. But this prediction only accounts for the *understanding* of an expression, and not for the correct way in which a word can be used. Although one can try to find systematizations for such norms, and point at *optimality* of the conceptualization, it is impossible to *predict* which situations satisfy *e* and which do not. Owing to additional conventional boundaries, the prediction can fail for the correct use of a word.

I have illustrated above the pitfalls of the semantic analysis with an analysis of the verb *open*. I have given some arguments against the idea that there exists exactly one meaning of the verb *open*. Instead, I have argued that the form is associated with the whole set of experiences of opening something, which may be ordered into subsets, each having a stronger internal similarity value than the whole set can have. I have argued that *basic* uses can be defined for the verb *open*; on these other uses can be based by transferring features of the basic uses. The *basic* uses provide a minimal transitivity for the different uses of *open*, and contain all the relevant features that are needed to understand non-basic uses of *open*.<sup>29</sup> The general meaning of a word, for example *open*, can be seen as an abstraction from the *basic* use of *open*, stating the features that are necessary to understand different uses of *open*. The definition of such features must be flexible in character, mirroring our conceptualization and consequently the way in which the linguistic system is set up. This means that the central feature of the verb *open*, viz. 'creation of a path', has an inherent 'fuzzy' character, mirroring our capacity to perceive similarity and contiguity between things under perspectives. As such, the common feature of the verb *open* refers both to cases where the path is physical, for example in the case of 'opening a door', and to cases where it must be understood in a more abstract sense, for example in the case of 'opening a perspective'. The existence of borderline cases such as 'opening a computer program' shows that the difference between a path in a physical and concrete sense, and a path in an abstract sense is not clear-cut or well-defined.

In my opinion the general meaning can best be seen as a *frame* within which the different uses of an expression may occur. Such a frame cannot be seen as a definition, as it does not predict the possible uses of a word, but rather defines the common features of a word, which may stand in opposition to other uses. The notion of 'frame' points to two things: (i) it can be seen as a *restriction* on the use of a particular form, or put differently, it can be seen as a restriction on the extensions of a particular form; and

---

<sup>29</sup> In exceptional cases family resemblance structures occur. Furthermore, in some cases the context may attribute additional features.

(ii) it is within the possibilities provided by the frame that different uses can be distinguished.

Firstly, in the linguistic system two opposite tendencies occur, viz. (i) the creation of polysemy to maintain relative stability in the linguistic system, and (ii) the development of basic or prototypical uses of an expression, which hold these different uses of an expression together. This means that basic uses can be seen as restrictions on meaning extension.

Secondly, for the language user some uses of an expression show more similarity to each other, than they show to other subsets. To give an example, for the language user opening a window and opening a door may form a subset within the polysemous complex. Yet, polysemy does not imply that with every new case of, for example, *open* or *eat*, a new meaning must be posited. Abstraction of form-meaning associations can be performed under different perspectives. This means that on the basis of different perspectives we can form different configurations of form-meaning associations. Furthermore, abstractions can be performed from different sets of data. If we make a taxonomic categorization of a set of form meaning associations, we can abstract first from the whole set, and then we can abstract from subsets of this set etc.

Although different usage types can be distinguished in the polysemous complex, the different subsets in the complex cannot always be seen as clearly defined usage types. It occurs often that no clear boundaries can be drawn for the different subsets of the set of all uses of a form. As such, the different 'semes' in the polysemous complex can therefore not be seen as classical concepts or definitions. New cases of use of a form do not have to be inferred either from clearly delineated concepts within the polysemous complex, or from well-defined general meanings. New uses can be inferred from different levels of abstraction. In a way, then, it does not make sense to speak about *one* meaning or *different* meanings in the case of words like *open*, since such a view of meaning treats meanings as definitions.

## CHAPTER III

---

# The Russian imperative

### 3.1 Introduction

In Russian there is a special imperative morphological form that is an instantiation of the lexical verb. The lexical verb can be seen as an abstraction from the different instantiations of the stem (infinitive, imperative, past tense, present tense, gerund, and participle), expressing an identical situation. In my analysis, I will use the term ‘imperative’ both for the morphological form and for the combination of the lexical verb and the morphological form. I will use the term ‘imperative situation’ for the lexical verb of the imperative. In the literature (e.g. Ebeling, 1956; Isachenko, 1957; Muravickaja, 1973; Veyrenc, 1980; *Russkaja Grammatika*, 1980) it is generally accepted that the imperative can be used for different functions, or to put it differently, that there are different imperative uses. This can be seen below, where I present different instances of the imperative as they are given in the literature, and the names that will be used in my classification, are given:

*Directive use* (*‘povelitel’noe značenie’*)

- (1) **Bud’** gotov. (Ebeling, 1956: 86)  
be-IMP-IMPERF ready  
‘Be prepared.’

The imperative is used to direct the addressee present in the speech situation to realize the imperative action. This imperative use can be paraphrased, depending on the context, with the infinitive, and with modal predicates like *dolžben* ('must') and *xotel'* ('want').

*Necessitive use ('dolžbenstvovatel'noe značenie')*

- (2) Vse ushli, a ja **sidi** doma i **rabotaj**. (Shvedova, 1974: 107)  
 all went, but I sit-IMP-IMPERF at.home and work-IMP-IMPERF  
 'Everybody has gone out, but I have to stay at home and study.'

The imperative is used to express that the subject is forced or obligated to do the imperative action. This imperative use can be paraphrased, depending on the context, with modal predicates that express necessity such as *dolžben, nado* ('must', 'have to').

*Narrative use ('povestvovatel'noe značenie')*

- (3) [B]arin tvoj prikazal mne otнести k ego Dune zapisochku, a ja i **pozabud'** gde Dunja-to ego zhivet. (A. Pushkin, *Povesti pokojnogo Ivana Petrovicha Belkina*)  
 master your ordered me take to his Dunja note, but I and forget-IMP-PERF where Dunja PRT his lives  
 'Your master ordered me to take a note to his Dunja, but I forgot where his Dunja lived.'

The imperative is used to express that the imperative action is unexpected. This imperative use can be paraphrased, depending on the context, with the past tense, the historical present, and a construction with the verb *vzjat'* ('take').

*Optative use ('želatel'noe značenie')*

- (4) **Minuj** nas pushche vsech pechalej i barskij gnev i barskaja ljubov'. (Xrakovskij & Volodin, 1986: 234/ Griboedov)  
 pass-IMP us more than.all sorrows and masters wrath and masters love  
 'May us pass more than all sorrows both the master's wrath and the master's love.'

The imperative is used to express that the speaker wishes the realization of the imperative action. This imperative use can be paraphrased, depending on the context, with *pust'* ('let') or with the subjunctive (past tense + *by*). This use of the imperative is not productive in modern Russian and occurs almost exclusively in petrified expressions.

*The Russian imperative*

*Concessive use ('ustupitel'noe znachenie')*

- (5) Kuda on ni skryvajsja, on ot menja ne ubezhit. (Mazon, 1914: 69)  
where he not hide-IMPER-IMPERF, he from me not run  
'Wherever he may hide, he won't get away from me.'

The imperative is used in sentences that express concession. This imperative use can be paraphrased, depending on the context, with the perfective present, the subjunctive, or the infinitive.

*Conditional use ('uslovnoe znachenie')*

- (6) **Razgoris'** atomnyj pozhar – i okazhutsja bessmyslennymi usilija ljudej dobroj voli. (Wade, 1992: 328)  
break.out-IMP-PERF atom war – and turn.out.to.be useless efforts of.people of.good will  
'If a nuclear war breaks out, the efforts of the people of good will will be useless.'
- (7) **Pridi** ja na desjat' minut ran'she, nichego by ne sluchilos'. (Isachenko, 1957: 11)  
come-IMP-PERF I on ten minutes earlier, nothing IRR not happened  
'Had I come ten minutes earlier, nothing would have happened.'

The imperative is used to express both the so-called hypothetical and the counterfactual condition. This imperative use can be paraphrased, depending on the context, with the conditional form *esli* ('if'), or in the case of the counterfactual use, with the subjunctive.

Without giving a detailed analysis of these uses, it is clear that the imperative has a different function in each of the sentences given above. The imperative occurs not only in its prototypical directive function, where the speaker attempts to direct the behavior of the addressee, but also in other functions where the agent of the action is not the addressee but a first, second or third person subject. Although the imperative can be said to have a different function in each of the sentences given above, I think that careful analysis of the imperative leads to the conclusion that the different uses are related to each other. In my analysis I will argue that the basic feature that keeps these uses together is the central feature of 'directivity-hortation'; this central feature means that the speaker intends to manipulate the world, or more specifically, intends to contribute to the realization of the imperative situation, by using the imperative form.<sup>1</sup> In the case of the directive variant,

---

<sup>1</sup> In the terms of the language philosopher Searle (1975), the direction of fit is word-to-world.

the speaker gives an impulse to the addressee, who is identical to the subject of the imperative. I use the term *hortative* for those cases where the speaker gives an impulse to a specified or non-specified entity (the addressee, a supernatural force) that is not identical to the subject of the imperative.<sup>2</sup>

The close relation between the different uses is underlined by the fact that some instances of the imperative can be classified as borderline cases between two different usage types, and that all the different imperative uses express so-called 'subjective modal features'; this means that in the case of the imperative the speaker expresses his attitude (wish, discontent, surprise, etc.) toward the imperative proposition. These subjective modal features are mentioned in the literature (e.g. Garde, 1963; Shvedova, 1974; Vasil'eva, 1969), but it does not make clear what these features precisely are, and how they come about.<sup>3</sup> As I will try to show below, the subjective modal features are interpretations of the 'directive' or 'hortative' meaning, and are typical for the imperative form; this means that they are not expressed by oppositional forms; that is, forms with which the imperative can be paraphrased.

Besides the semantic features shared between the different uses, we find that all the imperative uses share particular formal and syntactic features (or absence of features):

- + aspect (perfective, imperfective); all verbs in Russian have aspect
- – inflection for tense and gender
- + possibility of combination with nominative subject (and in some cases absence of an expressed formal subject)

Other semantic-syntactic features of the imperative form, or semantic-syntactic features of the clause in which the imperative occurs, differ from use to use. These are for example:

- The occurrence of the agreement suffix *-te*, which is attached to the imperative stem in the case of the directive uses if the subject is a second person plural.
- The possibility of attachment of the element *-ka* in the case of some directive, optative, and conditional uses.
- The word order of the imperative clause; for example the obligatory  $V_{imp}S$  order of the conditional and optative imperative.

---

<sup>2</sup> In the linguistic literature the term 'hortative' is also used for cases where the speaker gives an impulse to himself, or himself and other people to perform an action. I will not use the term hortative in this way.

<sup>3</sup> Not all authors use the term 'subjective modality' in relation with the imperative.

*The Russian imperative*

- The occurrence of particles; for example the occurrence of the particle *i*, which is usually placed before the narrative imperative, or the occurrence of the particle *by*, indicating irrealis, with some optative and conditional uses.
- The sentence structure in which the imperative clause occurs, for example the coordinate structure of the conditional imperative.

These semantic-syntactic features constitute context types for the different imperative uses.

About the meaning of the imperative one could ask such questions as:

- (i) What are the relations between these different uses?
- (ii) What are the contexts in which the different uses occur?
- (iii) How should the different uses be categorized?
- (iv) Can something like a general meaning be formulated?
- (v) If so, what is the status of this general meaning?

An analysis of the imperative must further explain the semantic and syntactic features that are shared by all imperative uses and those that differ from use to use. To give an example: in the case of the conditional use of the imperative as in (6) and (7), we always find that the first part of the sentence is introduced by the imperative; this is to say that the conditional use always has a verb subject (VS) order. The analysis must explain why this is the case. Furthermore, the analysis must show how the imperative uses differ from their nearest oppositional forms. To give an example: the analysis must explain the difference between the conditional imperative use (6–7) and conditional sentences with the conditional form *esli* ('if').

In the literature the Russian imperative we find analyses of individual uses (e.g. the analysis of the necessitive use by Shvedova, 1974). In other analyses different imperative uses are discussed (e.g. Isachenko, 1957), but the question concerning the relations between the different imperative uses is either not addressed or not put forward as the main question. An example of an analysis devoted to the different imperative uses in relation to one another is the study of the Russian imperative given by Ebeling (1956). Ebeling, following the model of Jakobson, gave a compact analysis of the Russian imperative from the monosemous point of view, that is, from the point of view that one can speak of one general imperative meaning and that the different uses must be seen as interpretations of this meaning. Since Ebeling's analysis is one of the few analyses known

to me that tries to relate the different imperative uses to one another in an adequate way, and since Ebeling's analysis is the starting-point for my own, I will briefly discuss it here.

In his analysis, Ebeling gives the following definition of the imperative meaning: "an action fulfilled as the result of a foreign impulse or permission" (1956: 86). Different cases may be distinguished according to the origin of the impulse or the permission. These different cases are:

(i) The speaker is the giver of the impulse. An example of this use is (1): *bud' gotov* ('be prepared'). Ebeling calls this the imperative in a narrower sense. In the case of conditional/ concessive use of the imperative (like (5)–(7) above), the speaker can also be seen as the giver of the impulse. In these cases "the speaker invites us to suppose a fact, and by using the imperative he adds that this fact would break the flow of events to which it would belong" (1956: 87). In the case of optative use like in (4): *Minuj nas pushche vsej pechalej I barskejj gnev i barskaja ljubov'* ('May us pass more than all sorrows both the master's wrath and the master's love'), the speaker can also be seen as the giver of the impulse, but the subject is a third person, in contrast to *bud' gotov*, where the subject is a second person.

(ii) The impulse or authorization does not come from a person, but from a whole situation. These are cases of type (2) above. The example given by Ebeling is *Drjani cheloveku odolzhat'sja ne sleduet. Eshche spasibo emu govori* ('It does not do to be under obligations to a good-for-nothing, for then you have to say thank you to him').

(iii) The actor himself is the urging or enabling force. These are cases of type (3) above. The example given by Ebeling is the following: *A tut eshche, kak narochno, podvernisl' drugoj znanomyj nam gimnazist, a nachni chvataťsja novymi chasami* ('And there still, as if on purpose, another schoolboy known to us crops up and begins to brag about his new watch'). In this case you can speak of a foreign impulse, because the action is presented as not in accordance with the preceding actions, as breaking the line of events.

Ebeling states that: "Thus the word 'foreign' in our definition does not point solely to the actor, but to the natural flow of events as a whole (...)" (1956: 86). With the provision that one meaning has to be given to the imperative, Ebeling's definition of the imperative could be reformulated as: 'an action that breaks the natural flow of events'. This definition is intended to function as a general meaning, that is, a necessary and sufficient condition for the correct use of the imperative form; the specific interpretation of the invariant meaning is influenced by the context in which the imperative form occurs.

Although Ebeling's analysis of the imperative seems adequate in many respects, and is preferable to analyses that do not go into the relations between the different uses, it has some weak points:

1. The first definition of the imperative given by Ebeling, ‘an action fulfilled as the result of a foreign impulse’, seems to be more adequate than the second, where he speaks of “an action that breaks the natural flow of events.” The first definition, however, does not take account of type (iii) (the actor himself is the urging or enabling force), which is problematic if one wishes to give *one* meaning for the imperative. This second definition of the imperative is not very clear, because it remains unspecified what exactly the natural flow of events is, and what breaking the natural flow of events means. Following this definition, one cannot adequately explain the semantic features which do not occur in all imperative cases, that is, which are not part of the imperative meaning, but are the result of the interaction of the imperative meaning and the particular context in which this meaning occurs. If we take, for example, sentence (2) and we interpret the imperative as the instruction that we have to interpret the predicate verb as an action that breaks the natural course of events, we could interpret it in different ways, for example:

- a. They have all gone out, but I will stay home and study.
- b. They have all gone out, but I stayed home and studied.
- c. They have all gone out, but I have to stay home and study.

In (a) and (b) the action of the subject breaks the natural flow of events because the action is seen as contrastive by the speaker of the sentence (as in the case of the narrative use); in (c) the action breaks the natural course of events because the action is seen as contrastive because it is again seen as contrastive *and* because the action is the result of a foreign (that is non-subject) impulse. The correct interpretation for (2) however is (c); interpretation (a) is impossible, while interpretation (b) is not possible in the given context since a narrative reading only occurs if the particle-conjunction *i* is placed before the imperative, and if the imperative is perfective.

Note also that on the basis of the imperative meaning given by Ebeling it is impossible to predict which uses are possible, and which are not. The description given by Ebeling cannot motivate why the following sentences with the given interpretation are incorrect:

- (8)     Zavtra **bud'** teplo.  
tomorrow be-IMP warm  
Cannot mean: ‘It must be hot tomorrow.’
- (9)     **Idi!**  
go-IMP  
Cannot mean: ‘Let’s go.’

The Russian imperative cannot be used to express epistemic necessity, or to express an impulse from the speaker to himself together with other people. The fact that the imperative meaning formulated by Ebeling can also be seen as a description for uses that are described by oppositional forms, is problematic if the meaning has the status of a necessary and sufficient condition for the correct use of a form.

2. The meaning of the imperative does not fit the different imperative uses equally, and needs more elaboration. More specifically, in my opinion it is correct to say that in the case of the directive sentence *bud' gotov* ('be prepared') there is an impulse from the speaker to the hearer to *perform* the action conveyed by the imperative, but it is doubtful whether in the case of the conditional imperative like *Skazhi mne, ja sejchas ustroil by vse* ('If he had told me that, I would have arranged everything by now') there is a *similar* impulse from the speaker to the hearer to *suppose* a certain fact. In my opinion, it is necessary to make a distinction between 'directive' and 'hortative' imperative uses. In the case of the directive uses the speaker gives an impulse to the addressee, who is identical to the subject of the imperative, to perform the action. In the case of the hortative uses such as the optative and the conditional, the speaker directs the addressee to contribute to the realistic or imagined realization of the imperative situation by another agent. As I will show below, the difference between directive and hortative uses can be motivated by the occurrence or non-occurrence of the suffix *-te*.

3. The meaning does not explain or give sufficient insight into the relations between the different uses. To give an example: the necessitive use seems to be more closely related to the directive use than to the optative use. Ebeling's analysis does not account for this, because all uses have the same status of interpretation. An analysis along the lines of Ebeling does not take into account that in some cases clear usage types can be distinguished (viz. the different types given above), while other uses seem to have the status of interpretations (e.g. different directive uses, such as order versus permission).

4. The analysis does not specify the process of interaction between the general meaning and its context. It does not take account of different semantic and syntactic features of the imperative sentence like word order, aspect, the occurrence of particles, etc., which makes the analysis incomplete.

In order to resolve the weak points mentioned above, one could try to reformulate the imperative meaning and extend the given analysis, or one could formulate another analysis. In the literature (e.g. Wittgenstein, 1984; Rosch, 1973, 1978; Bartsch, 1985; Lakoff, 1990) the idea that abstract meanings can be given for linguistic items has been under fierce attack. These analyses propose that forms may be associated with different

interrelated meanings, and that polysemy is the rule rather than the exception in language. I think that the weak points in the description of the Russian imperative can be seen as resulting from the fact that Ebeling wishes to analyze the imperative from a strict monosemous point of view, whereas a polysemy-based approach to the imperative would be more appropriate. If one claims that the imperative is a polysemous complex, this means that we cannot speak of one invariant imperative meaning such as the meaning proposed by Ebeling, but should rather speak of different imperative uses that are related to one another.

In principle a polysemy-based analysis can be seen as an analysis that treats all the uses in the polysemous complex as having the status of 'semes'; in such an analysis the different meanings can all be described in terms of definitions (necessary and sufficient conditions for the correct use of a form). In my opinion, such an analysis is incorrect for the description of the Russian imperative, because it does not take into account that (i) the idea of direction is basic to all the imperative uses, and (ii) some instances of the imperative can be seen as borderline cases between different uses. In my opinion this can best be captured by giving a basic imperative meaning; this basic meaning of the Russian imperative can be defined as in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1

---

*Definition of the meaning of basic 'V<sub>IMPERATIVE</sub>'*

By using the imperative the speaker expresses that he gives an impulse directed at the realization of 'V' (by S, if S is expressed or not identified); this presupposes that:

- 'not V' is given
- there is a contrast between 'V' and 'not V' (because otherwise no impulse would have to be given to realize 'V'); put differently 'V' breaks the expected course of events in the sense that giving an impulse presupposes that without the impulse, V would not be realized

where the notion of impulse can be understood as follows: by uttering the imperative, the speaker intends to contribute to the realization of the imperative action, because the addressee (which may be expressed by the subject of the imperative predicate, or in the case of the optative, some other force) can follow the direction by contributing to the realization of 'V'.

---

The basic use can be seen as the imperative use on the basis of which other imperative uses can be understood; note that this definition applies both to the *directive* use and to the *optative* use. In the case of *directive* uses the speaker intends to manipulate the behavior of the addressee present in the speech situation to realize the imperative situation, whereas in the case of *optative* uses, the speaker tries to manipulate the behavior of the subject *indirectly*; by using the imperative the speaker hopes that the addressee or some non-specified force will contribute to the realization of the imperative situation by the non-addressee subject. For such cases I use the term ‘hortative’. In modern Russian, the optative use can no longer be seen as a productive use of the imperative. It can therefore be argued that for the modern Russian language system the basic use has to be reformulated or specified such that the impulse is directed at the second person addressee. I will say more about this below when I discuss the different imperative uses.

An important reason to define a basic imperative meaning is that in this way the features that are shared by all the imperative uses (and that may be absent in the case of oppositional forms) can be motivated. The imperative is an instantiation of a lexical verb, which means that the imperative has aspect, and the valency structure of the lexical verb with which it forms a synthesis. There are three important interrelated features shared by all verbs in the imperative mood that can be attributed to the basic imperative meaning given above, viz. (i) the absence of tense, (ii) the possibility of combining the imperative with a nominative subject, and (iii) the subjective modal nature of the imperative. I will discuss these features here.

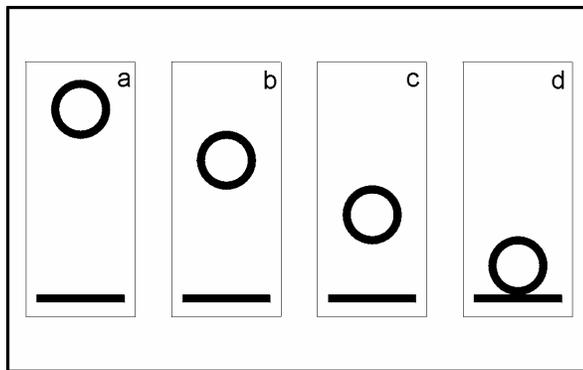
The imperative can be seen as a verb, or put differently, the imperative is one of the instantiations in the verbal system. Traditionally, from the Greek period on, the verb has been seen as a grammatical part of speech that expresses an *action* or *activity* (in my terminology ‘situation’), that is, roughly speaking, the conceptualization of something that is realized in time, which can function as (part of) the *predicate* of the sentence (cf. Jarceva, 1990). This description contains two important notions, viz. the idea of *realization in time* and the notion of *predicate*. The word ‘predicate’ comes from the Greek logico-philosophical tradition, where the *predicate* is defined as the basic part of a *judgment*, that which says something about the *subject*. Below, I will briefly discuss the two important aspects of the verb, viz. the notion of *time*, and secondly, the notion of *subjecthood*.

The traditional idea that verbs have to do with phenomena that are conceived in time is worked out in different ways in the literature. Givón (1984: 51–52), for example, argues that “experiences (...) which stay relatively *stable* over time (...) tend to be lexicalized in human language as *nouns* (...). At the other extreme of the lexical-

phenomenological scale, one finds experiential clusters denoting rapid changes in the state of the universe. These are prototypical events or actions, and languages tend to lexicalize them as verbs". Note that the description given here by Givón must be seen as an *extensionally based* description. In the world, as we experience it, there are things that remain stable, and there are things that change; language mirrors this observed distinction.

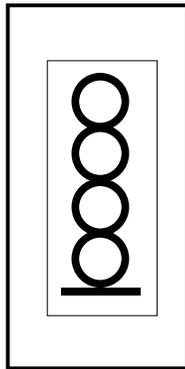
Another, more *intensionally* based, way of describing verbs is used by Langacker (1991a/ b). The description that Langacker (1991) gives of verbs can be seen as a translation of the traditional view about verbs in terms of the model of Cognitive Grammar. The traditional perspective that verbs express something that takes place in time is translated in terms of the perceptive-cognitive abilities that we need in order to experience something in time. According to Langacker, in the case of verbs we manipulate the perceptual information in terms of *sequential scanning*. This can be seen as the cognitive mode of processing in which a series of states are conceived through the successive transformation of one into another in a non-cumulative nature. The mode of sequential scanning is represented by Langacker (1991b: 80) as in Fig. 3.2.

Figure 3.2



The mode of sequential scanning can be opposed to the mode of *summary scanning*, in which the component states or specifications are activated in a cumulative fashion, so that all facets of a complex structure are coexistent and simultaneously available as a gestalt (cf. Figure 3.3).

Figure 3.3



Langacker argues that this latter mode of scanning is typical for prepositions like *across*, while for spatial verbs like *cross*, where the aspect of *movement* is important, the idea of sequential scanning means that every scanned state differs from the other because of the position of the scanned object. In the case of verbs where such an idea of movement is absent, for example in the case of verbs that indicate mental states, such as *think that*, *want*, etc., or in the case of copular verbs like *be*, every scanned state is identical to the one preceding or following it. The description that Langacker gives of verbs can be seen as an intensionally based description because he emphasizes the cognitive abilities of humans to *impose* their cognitive-perceptual structure on the world. As such, the same state of affairs can often be conceptualized as a verb or as a noun (e.g. *arrive* versus *arrival*; for a more detailed discussion of nominalization see 4.4.2).

Neither Givón nor Langacker, in the cited extracts, goes into the function that verbs have in the sentence, viz. the predicative function of verbs, and the idea of subjecthood. As I have discussed above, an important feature of verbs is that they express phenomena that are conceived in time. An important difference between verbs and other parts of speech (such as prepositions) is that verbs are often associated with *actors* and other participants of an action or event.

The importance of subjecthood in the case of verbs can be illustrated by reinterpreting the picture given by Langacker in the following way. When we perceive a dynamic phenomenon, we often perceive it as a property of a thing or entity. For example, if we watch the movement of a ball flying through the air, we see the movement as a property of the ball, that is, although the ball and its movement may be

conceptualized separately, they are not conceptualized independently of each other. Figure 3.2 above can be interpreted as a scene where we can identify a referent (ball) which stays identical over time, and the action of the referent (flies); this can be expressed in language as 'The ball flies'. The inflection on the verb for person, number and tense (and in Russian in some cases gender) indicates that the action is related to a specific person, and to the time relative to the speech-moment. The presence of agreement features (person, number, gender) means that the subject and the verb are interdependent (finite verb presupposes subject, subject presupposes finite verb). In my opinion, the idea of a *phenomenon in time*, the idea of a *subject*, and the idea of *realization*, are interrelated in the case of a subject-predicate structure. In the case of a subject, prototypically in the nominative case, we interpret the subject as expending 'energy' on realization of the situation, such that we perceive a phenomenon in time.<sup>4</sup>

The imperative can be seen as an instantiation of a verb, which means that the imperative expresses a situation, that is, a phenomenon conceived in time. In the case of the imperative we find a nominative (pro)noun whose function is to identify the subject of the imperative; in some cases the pronoun is not expressed, and here the identity of the subject is (i) given in the context (S=addressee), (ii) left unspecified (S=generic), or, (iii) in the case of impersonal verbs, absent. The nominative in the case of the imperative can be motivated as follows. The basic imperative presupposes a conceptualization that can be broken down into the following two (interrelated) features:

- (i) The addressee has to *imagine* a scene where the subject performs the imperative action.
- (ii) The addressee has to *comply* with this scene (if S=addressee), or contribute to the compliance with the scene (if S≠addressee).

Feature (i) means that part of the imperative conceptualization is the idea of a scene where the agent and the situation are abstracted from an identical scene where the situation is conceptualized in its moment of realization. In my opinion, this accounts for the occurrence of the nominative subject. In contrast to the indicative and the past tense, however, in most cases the imperative does not express agreement. There is only agreement between the subject and the verb with second person plural directive uses, that is, with uses where the second person plural addressee is identical to the subject of the

---

<sup>4</sup> The idea of energy also applies to cases where the verb only indicates a property of a referent, for example, *the ball is red*. The notion of subjecthood in general falls beyond the scope of this analysis.

verb. It could be argued that this means that with these directive uses there is only agreement with the subject of the force or impulse, and not with the subject of the lexical verb. In the case of directive second person plural, the occurrence of agreement is connected with the type of impulse (see 3.2.3.2). The notion of agreement in the case of the directive imperative differs from the notion of agreement in the case of the indicative. In the case of the indicative the scene expressed by the verb is conceptualized in its moment of realization, which means that the morphological form for person, number or gender and the nominative refer to an identical referent and scene. In the case of the imperative the verb expresses an imagined situation that is to be performed by the addressee, which can be expressed in the nominative. I suspect that the absence of agreement with all imperative uses (except for the second person plural directive use) may be connected with the fact that the imperative always expresses the idea of *compliance*. Although the imperative always presupposes the idea of an action conceptualized in its moment of realization, it *also* presupposes the idea of an action that is to be realized by some force (feature (ii)). The function of the nominative is to identify a referent, which is the *imagined* subject of the imperative. As such, the relation between the imperative situation and the nominative pronoun is different from the relation between the finite verb and the nominative (pro)noun.<sup>5</sup>

Besides the absence of agreement in most cases, the imperative does not express *tense*. In Russian the term ‘tense’ is used for the function of two conjugations of the verb, viz. the indicative and the past tense, of locating situations (states, events, etc.) in a temporal domain during, after or before the moment of speaking or the ‘now’. Tense is not expressed by the imperative and the infinitive (for the absence of tense in the case of the infinitive, see Chapter IV). The absence of tense is connected with the fact that the imperative expresses that there is some *force which is directed at the realization* of the situation. By uttering the imperative the speaker gives an impulse to realize the imperative situation (in the case of the directive use, optative use, conditional use and concessive use), or ‘mimics’ the impulse directed at the realization of the situation (in the case of the necessitive use, and in a weakened sense in the case of the narrative use).

The absence of tense for those cases where the speaker is the giver of the impulse (directive, optative, conditional, concessive) can be motivated in a straightforward way because giving an impulse presupposes that the situation has not been realized yet. In the case of the necessitive and the narrative, however, the situation may have been realized at

---

<sup>5</sup> The function of the nominative (pro)noun can partly be compared to the function of the pronoun in the nominative-infinitive construction; in the case of this construction, however, the verbal element is not expressed by a form, but is an interpretative phenomenon. (see 4.4.3).

the moment of speaking (in the case of the necessitive) or has necessarily been realized before the moment of speaking (in the case of the narrative). In these cases, however, uttering the imperative means that the speaker *partially identifies* with the impulse giver in the sense that he 'repeats' in his mind the moment where some force is directed at the realization of the situation. In the case of the necessitive this means that the speaker acts as if he places himself at the moment where the impulse is given, in the case of the narrative this means that the speaker does as if he *directly experiences* the narrated course of events. I will use the term 'dynamic construal' for the specific construal of the imperative. Another instance of 'dynamic construal' is the use of verbal interjections such as *bac, gjad', pryg, tolk, chlop,* and *cap carap*:

- (10) Ja, znaete, kak vizhu muzhchinu, tak srazu **pryg** k nemu na koleni i sizhu sebe, poka ne otderut.<sup>6</sup> (A. Kazancev, *Begushchie Stranniki*)  
I, you.know, when I.see man, then immediately jump-PRT to him on knees and sit to.myself, as.long.as not they.tear.of  
'You know, as soon as I see a man – jump! – I am on his knees and I stay there, as long as they don't pull me away.'

What the imperative use under discussion and these cases have in common is that a close contact between the speaker, the hearer, and the narrated events is established, by partial mimicking of the narrated events.

The so-called subjective modal features can also be attributed to the basic meaning given above. The imperative expresses that there is some force directed at the realization of the situation. This presupposes that without this impulse the situation would not be realized, or put differently, the realization of the imperative situation breaks the *expected course* of events. As I will argue below, the subjective modal features of the different imperative uses can all be accounted for if this specific nature of the imperative is taken into account.

I have argued that a basic imperative meaning can be given, and that this meaning can account for the shared features of the imperative. The idea of a basic use can be compared to the idea of a prototypical use. The term prototype is used by Rosch (1973, 1978) for the clearest example of a category such as 'bird'. In the case of the imperative, one cannot speak of categorization in the same sense, because the different phenomena that can be expressed by the imperative do not have the same ontological status as different types of birds. More specifically, a particular instance of a bird exists no matter whether one has a

---

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.theatre.ru:8084/drama/kazancev/stranniki\\_2.html](http://www.theatre.ru:8084/drama/kazancev/stranniki_2.html)

linguistic expression for it or not, and no matter how it is classified. This is not the case for the different extensions of basic imperative use. In the case of the imperative the basic use is not so much the clearest example of some category, but must be seen as the use that always plays a part if the imperative form is used. In other words, the different imperative forms can only be understood on the basis of this basic form.

In my analysis I will describe the understanding of the imperative by the process of selection (and in one case canceling) of features of the basic meaning under perspectives provided by contexts. The basic imperative use presupposes a particular attitude of the speaker toward the imperative action, namely that the speaker wants the action to be realized in the stretch of time starting with the moment of speaking, and a particular situational context, namely that the addressee is not performing or is not going to perform the imperative action/ situation.<sup>7</sup> Different uses arise when the situational context is changed, or when the attitude of the speaker toward the imperative action is changed. Change of the imperative use is possible if the language user can interpret the new use, and integrate it in the conceptual structure built up so far by selection and in some special cases canceling of features with the help of general cognitive-pragmatic knowledge.

The idea of selection of features can be seen as the highlighting of some features and the backgrounding of others from some set of interrelated features. In the case of the imperative one can speak of a set of interrelated features expressed by the imperative because the existence of some feature presupposes the existence of some other feature. To give an example, the feature 'directivity' presupposes the feature 'at the moment of speaking the imperative action is not being realized'. In some cases the idea of direction is present, but the imperative is uttered in a situation where the subject of the imperative is already performing the imperative action, e.g.:

- (11) **Muchajsja!** Ne nado delat' takie gluposti! (Barentsen, *forthcoming*)  
suffer-IMP-IMPERF! not necessary do-INF-IMPERF such stupid.things  
'Yes suffer! You shouldn't have been so stupid.'

In such cases the feature of 'speaker commitment' present in the feature of 'direction' is selected, and highlighted, such that the imperative is used to express that the speaker agrees with the performance and continuation of the imperative action.

Bartsch (1998) argues that canceling of features is not part of the process of meaning extension. In my opinion, canceling is indeed not part of most cases of

---

<sup>7</sup> Such conditions can be seen as obviousness conditions (cf. Searle, 1975)

meaning extension, but may take place in special cases. An example of such as special case is possibly the narrative imperative. In the literature it is often remarked that the narrative has a special status in the imperative complex of uses, because the idea of 'direction' or 'impulse' does not seem to be part of the narrative imperative meaning. The narrative imperative is therefore sometimes treated as unrelated to the other imperative uses (e.g. Muravickaja, 1973). As I will argue, in the case of the narrative imperative the feature of 'unexpectedness' is selected, and the idea of 'direction' is canceled, or at least weakened. In the case of the central uses (directive or necessitive use) the feature of 'unexpectedness' is presupposed by the feature of 'foreign impulse', that is, they form a cluster of features, whereas in the case of the narrative use the feature of 'unexpectedness' occurs independently from the feature of foreign impulse (although it could be argued that the latter is still present in a weakened form). Note that a particular use can only be extended if the new use shares more characteristic features with the basic use than with an oppositional form, otherwise there is no need for the language user to extend the use of a form. In the case of the narrative use this means that the feature of 'unexpectedness' is not on a par with the feature of 'unexpectedness' expressed by other forms, but can only be compared to the feature of 'unexpectedness' as it occurs in the other imperative uses, viz. unexpectedness as the result of a foreign impulse. Because of this, the narrative imperative can still be seen as part of the polysemous complex of imperative uses.

The extension of the basic imperative use presupposes the capacity to integrate different contextual information, both linguistic and non-linguistic, in order to come to the correct interpretation of the form in its context. This means that the language user must be able to integrate information such as word order, and the absence/ nature of the expressed subject with the meaning expressed by the imperative, and be able to infer how the change in situational context changes the basic meaning of the imperative.

The process of looking for new perspectives for extending the use of the imperative form is mediated and facilitated by various cognitive and pragmatic capacities that are part of human knowledge. If we look at the meaning extension of the imperative we can see that the following capacities play an important part:

- (i) The capacity to abstract from here and now (from the immediately given speaker-addressee context), and to identify with, or to take the perspective of, a force other than the speaker.

- (ii) The capacity to construe a hypothetical imaginary scene, where the scene is not actually to be realized, but is placed in an imaginary or mental space for reasoning purposes only.

The strategies named under (i) account for the extension of the directive imperative use to the necessitive imperative use. As I will argue, the extension from the directive use to the necessitive use can be reconstructed as taking place in various intermediary steps, where the feature of ‘speaker involvement’ is weakened. The strategy named under (ii) accounts for the extension of the directive use to the conditional and concessive directive use, and of the optative use to the conditional use. This strategy is reminiscent of the cognitive capacities described in terms of mental spaces (Fauconnier & Sweetser, 1996). In my analysis I will show how these various strategies play a part in the extension of the basic imperative use.

An important question that I will address in this analysis is how different uses of the imperative can be distinguished from one another. Because of the existence of a basic use that plays a part in every imperative use, the polysemous complex cannot be seen as a complex of clear-cut and discrete meanings or ‘semes’. Although some uses can be clearly distinguished from one another, many borderline cases exist. The imperative has no invariant abstract meaning that can be compared to a definition, but must be seen as a complex of different interrelated uses that can have a more or less independent status, but that always function in relation to other uses in the same complex, because of the existence of the basic directive meaning.

The different uses in the polysemous complex can be seen as different *functions* of the imperative. Some insight into the status of the different uses can be found in Muravickaja (1973). She asked (highly educated) native speakers to label different imperative uses with the following meanings: *povelienie/pobuzhdenie* (instruction), *pozhelanie* (wish), *dolzhenstvovanie* (necessity), *uslovie* (condition), and *ustupka* (concession). She did not give examples of the narrative use because in her view this use must be seen as not related to the other uses (i.e. it is a case of homonymy). It was found that the respondents could very easily distinguish these different uses from one another (1973: 51). It was also found that in the process of distinguishing the respondents leaned heavily on the possibility of paraphrase (1973: 55.) Thus necessitive use could be easily distinguished from other uses because this use can be paraphrased with *dolzhen*, which is not the case for other uses.

Although Muravickaja’s (1973) test leaves many questions unanswered, it suggests that language users classify primarily on the basis of function, rather than on the basis

of meaning. An example of a function is ‘condition’; such a function can be expressed by different usage types, for example the conditional use, the directive use and the optative use. This provides evidence that function and meaning play a part on different levels in language. Function can be seen as a category of *use*, whereas meaning must be seen as an abstraction from use. As I will argue, the meaning of the imperative can be identified with the basic meaning given earlier, whereas the different uses of the imperative can be seen as different functions of this basic meaning.

It should be noted, finally, that other linguists have pointed to the polysemous nature of the imperative. Take for example the following remark by Xrakovskij & Volodin (1986: 227): “From what we have said, it follows, that we are skeptical about the efforts to define a general meaning for the imperative that accounts for both the literal and the non-literal uses of the imperative”.<sup>8</sup> Similar remarks are made by Vasil’eva (1969), Muravickaja (1973), Veyrenc (1980), and others.

An important task of my analysis is to elucidate which linguistic and non-linguistic contextual factors contribute to the interpretation of the imperative form, or to put it differently, I will try to determine the context-types for the different uses. With this analysis I hope to explain the semantic and syntactic features that are shared by all the imperative uses, the features that differ from use to use, and the semantic and syntactic differences between the imperative uses and their oppositional forms.

In the following sections I will give an analysis of the different imperative uses. I will discuss each use separately and then give an overview of the relations between the different uses. The relations between the different uses can be represented in a simplified way as presented in Figure 3.4.

The model given in Figure 3.4 is simplified because borderline cases exist between different uses. These borderline cases will be discussed in the analysis that I will give in the following sections. In my presentation I will employ the following classification of the imperative use:

- (a) Directive use and derived uses (3.2)
- (b) Necessitive uses (3.3)
- (c) Narrative uses (3.4)
- (d) Optative uses (3.5)
- (e) Conditional uses (3.6)

---

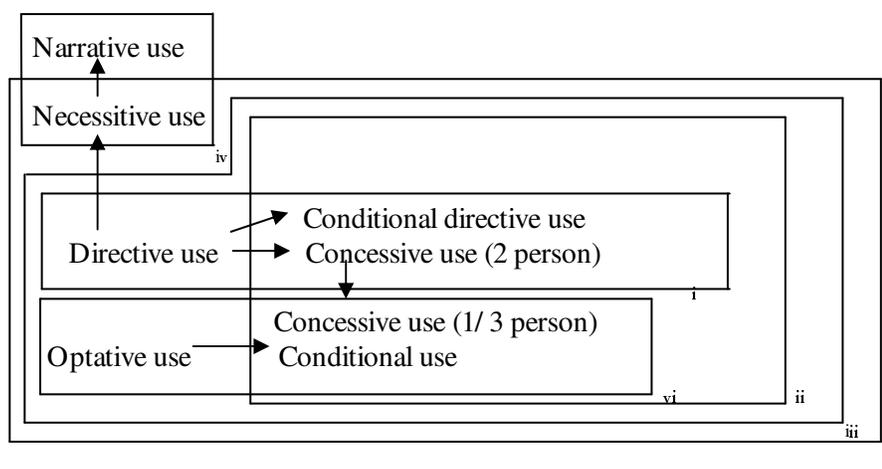
<sup>8</sup> “Iz skazannogo sleduet, chto my skepticheski odnosimsja k popytkam vydelit’ u imperativa takoe obshchee znachenie, kotorye bylo by emu svojstvenno kak pri prjamyx, tak pri neprjamyx upotreblenijax.” (Xrakovskij & Volodin, 1986: 227)

(f) Concessive uses with *ni* and *˚ot'* (3.7)

The classification given here is in accordance with most classifications given in the literature (e.g. Ebeling, 1956; *Russkaja Grammatika*, 1980; Veyrenc, 1980).

Below I will discuss these different usage types.

Figure 3.4



- (i) Directive uses
- (ii) Conditional uses
- (iii) The speaker is the giver of the impulse
- (iv) The impulse giver is not the speaker
- (v) Uses where there is a (more or less) identifiable impulse giver
- (vi) Hortative uses (the speaker directs the subject indirectly)

### 3.2 The directive use of the Russian imperative

#### 3.2.1 Introduction

In this section I will give an analysis of the directive imperative construction. I will argue that one can define a basic directive meaning for the imperative, from which it is possible to derive other uses that can be seen as extensions of this basic meaning by means of

selecting some features and backgrounding others under a perspective provided by a context. I will argue further that the directive imperative has particular features that are not expressed by oppositional forms, which are taken to have similar functions in certain contexts but, as I will show, have different cognitive functions or meanings. I will argue that the existence of the directive meaning accounts for the specific distribution of the directive imperative, and motivates the difference in use from its oppositional forms.

This section has the following structure. In 3.2.2 I will give a definition of the meaning of the basic directive imperative use. In 3.2.3 I will discuss some semantic-syntactic features of the imperative. In 3.2.4 I will discuss some peripheral uses of the directive imperative.

### 3.2.2. The meaning of the directive imperative

I will start my analysis of the imperative with the most frequent imperative use, viz. the *directive* use of the imperative. This is the use where the speaker attempts to get the hearer (or addressee) to do something, or in the case of negation, not to do something. The following sentences are examples of directive uses of the imperative:

- (12) **Vstan?**  
get.up-IMP-PERF  
'Get up.'
- (13) **Nenavid?, preziraj menja, dumaj obo mne kak xochesh', no ne ... ubivaj menja!** (A. Chexov, *Bezotcovshchina*)  
hate-IMP-IMPERF, despise-IMP-IMPERF me, think-IMP-IMPERF about me how you.want, but no ... kill-IMP-IMPERF me  
'Hate me, despise me, think of me whatever you want, but don't .... kill me!'

In these sentences the imperative has a directive meaning, viz. it expresses the impulse from the speaker to the addressee to perform the action expressed by the imperative. The notion 'directivity' means that the speaker intends to contribute to the realization of the imperative action by the addressee by uttering the imperative.

Following the strategy of concept formation discussed in Chapter I, I will start the analysis by giving an informal definition of the *basic* directive imperative, and then discuss peripheral uses of the directive imperative by showing how these uses can be derived by selection of some features and backgrounding of others under contexts. This means that I will not try to incorporate all the uses of the directive imperative within one description,

but I will rather define a basic use, and describe other (peripheral) uses as particular extensions of this basic use.

In Figure 3.5, I give a definition for the basic directive imperative. Figure 3.6 can be used as a frame for the directive imperative.

Figure 3.5

---

**The speaker directs the hearer at  $t_0$  to perform the imperative situation V:**

→  $SIT(V_{+aspect})t_1, t_0 < t_1$

SIT maps a linguistic expression on the situation at t in which this expression is fulfilled

Situation = action, state, process

Directs = the speaker intends to contribute to the realization of the situation by the addressee by uttering the imperative; this means that the speaker invokes the addressee to perform the imperative situation. The idea of directivity ranges from orders, where the speaker wants the realization of the situation, to cases of permission, where the speaker only accepts the imperative situation.

SIT (V) = situation where the action expressed by the imperative verb and its context is present

→ SIT (V) = idea of realization of the imperative situation<sup>9</sup>

$t_1$  = time or period associated with the realization of the imperative situation, posterior to  $t_0$ , the moment of uttering

---

Figure 3.6

---

| <b>Force</b> | <b>Goal</b>             | <b>Subject of situation</b> | <b>Object of force</b> |
|--------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| Speaker      | → $SIT(V_{+aspect})t_1$ | Addressee                   | Addressee              |

---



---

<sup>9</sup> I would like to stress that the idea of realization expressed by the imperative cannot be equated with the idea of change of situation that is typical for the perfective aspect as described in Barentsen (1985). In the case of the imperative the idea of change of situation relates to the non-occurrence of the action versus the occurrence of the action. In the case of the perfective aspect the idea of change of situation relates to the attainment of some natural or imposed end point of the action. In the case of the imperative the speaker conceptualizes the idea of realization of an already aspectual action:  $SIT(V_{+aspect})$ .

The meaning of the imperative given in Figure 3.5 and 3.6 presupposes that:

- (i) The situation is conceived as controllable or as something to which the addressee can contribute.
- (ii) The imperative situation breaks the expected course of events, that is, at the moment of speaking SIT (not V) is the case, or is to be expected.
- (iii) The speaker commits himself to wishing or accepting the realization of the situation.
- (iv) If the imperative is uttered, the addressee is directed to *imagine* a scene where he is the subject of the situation, *and* to fulfill this situation by performing the situation in question. As I will argue below in 3.2.4 the presence of the feature ‘impulse to imagine’ accounts for the derived uses of the imperative, more specifically the conditional use, and for the differences in use from oppositional forms.<sup>10</sup>

I will briefly discuss these different presuppositions below.

### 3.2.2.1 Controllability

Because the imperative expresses a direction of the speaker to the hearer to perform an action, the hearer must in principle be able to follow the direction of the speaker, or at least be able to contribute in some way to the realization of the imperative action. This explains why sentences like the following, given in Xrakovskij & Volodin (1986: 146–147), are not possible in a normal context:

- (14) ?Ochutis’ v Krymu.  
find yourself-IMP-PERF in Crimea  
‘Find yourself in the Crimea.’
- (15) ?Legko otkroj dver’.  
easily open-IMP-PERF door  
‘Easily open the door.’

---

<sup>10</sup> Of course, imagination is part of every act of conceptualization. In this case, however, an *impulse* is given to imagine something, which presupposes that the act of imagination requires some effort from the addressee.

It is important to notice that the fact that the addressee must be able to control the situation, or at least be able to contribute to the situation, is *presupposed* by the directive meaning: by using the imperative, the action denoted by the verb is conceptualized as a controllable situation or as a situation that the addressee can influence by his behavior.

In some cases the imperative predicate is used in the case of situations which do not have a clear controllable character, and in which the direction has the character of a wish. This is the case for example in the sentence *Spi spokojno* ('Sleep peacefully') where the imperative is used with the verb *spat* ('sleep') and an adverbial modification. Here the speaker expresses his wish that the addressee will sleep well. In this case the addressee cannot of course really 'control' the action, but he can contribute to the likelihood that the action will happen, for example by taking a comfortable position in bed, closing his eyes, and thinking about nice things such that any disturbances may be overcome.

The idea of 'contributing to the (non-)realization of the situation' is also present in the case of negation and the perfective aspect. This is exemplified by the following sentence:

- (16) Ne **zabolej**, Norman. Tol'ko ne **zabolej**.<sup>11</sup> (A. Azimov, *Vybory*)  
 not fall.ill-IMP-PERF, Norman. just not fall.ill-IMP-PERF  
 'Don't fall ill, Norman. Just don't fall ill.'

In this sentence the speaker urges the addressee not to realize the undesirable imperative action *zaboleť* ('fall ill'). Here one might speak of control because the speaker directs the addressee to gather all his strength so that the undesirable situation will not happen. In such cases, it may be that the speaker pretends to hold the addressee responsible for the possible realization of the imperative situation, thus stressing that he finds the imperative situation undesirable.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.moshkow.pp.ru:5000/lat/FOUNDATION/election.txt>

<sup>12</sup> Aspect plays a very important part with respect to control in cases like these. Compare for example *Ne zabud'* (not forget-IMP-PERF) versus *Ne zabynvaj* (not forget-IMP-IMPERF). The perfective aspect is typical of cases where the speaker just expresses that he does not want the addressee to forget the situation (e.g. 'When you go to the shop, don't forget to buy a bottle of wine.'). whereas the imperfective aspect is typical of cases where the speaker urges the addressee to 'keep on putting energy' in the non-realization of the situation (e.g. 'I really need the wine, so please don't forget to buy it.'). The aspect of the directive imperative in relation to the notion of control is discussed by many authors (e.g. Xrakovskij (1988) and Paducheva (1996)); I refer the reader to these authors for more discussion.

It must further be noted that the directive imperative may also be used in cases where the speaker acts *as if* he directs the addressee to perform the imperative situation. This is the case for example in the sentence *Ne umiraj!* ('not die-IMP-IMPERF; 'Don't die!'). Such sentences stand on the borderline between optative sentences, where the speaker directs some 'supernatural force' to contribute to the realization of the imperative action, and directive sentences, where the speaker directs the addressee as if he could contribute to the (non-)realization of the imperative action.<sup>13</sup>

In some other contexts, specifically in the case of conditional contexts, and in the case of so-called reinforcement use, the directive imperative can occur with actions that are usually not performed in contexts where they can be seen as controlled. Consider for example the following sentence:

- (17) **Muchajsja!** Ne nado delat' takie gluposti! (Barentsen, *forthcoming*)  
suffer-IMP-IMPERF! not necessary do-INF-IMPERF such stupid.things  
'Yes suffer! You shouldn't have been so stupid.'

Such cases must be seen as interpretations of the basic meaning where some features are selected under a particular perspective provided by the context. These cases do not directly fall under the basic use of the directive imperative. I will discuss them in 3.2.4.

Note that the extent to which the combination of the imperative and some lexical verb creates an acceptable sentence may be partly conventional. In Russian it is perfectly normal for example to say *Bud' zdorov* ('Be-IMP healthy: 'May you be healthy', 'Take care'), whereas a translation in Dutch with the same verb and an imperative (*?Wees gezond*) is not acceptable. A complete description of the directive imperative will have to list such conventions, and state any regularities in the compatibility of lexical verbs and the imperative. Note that such regularities may possibly be motivated by pointing at other, non-directive uses of the imperative. In contrast to English or Dutch, the Russian imperative may also be used as an optative with third and first persons; in the case of the optative use of the Russian imperative the speaker does not direct the addressee to realize the imperative situation, but directs some other, often supernatural, force to contribute to the realization of the imperative situation. It could be that the use of *bud' zdorov* may be seen as a use close in character to the optative use of the imperative ('May you be healthy') The fact that in Russian the imperative can be used

---

<sup>13</sup> A similar phenomenon can be found in sentences like *Drop dead!* Such sentences, I think, must be seen as special, playful uses of the directive imperative, because the speaker here is not actually intending to contribute to the realization of the action by using the imperative.

for various non-directive functions suggests that the directive use of the Russian imperative may share semantic features with other non-directive uses, and as such, may differ in meaning from directive imperatives in other languages, where the imperative does not have these other functions.

There seem to be further restrictions on the use of the directive imperative that have to do with control. Xrakovskij & Volodin (1986: 147), for example, remark that it is unclear why the following sentence is ungrammatical \**Ivan, otdoxni iz-za golovnoj boli* (lit. 'Ivan, rest because of your headache'), whereas the following sentence is fully acceptable *Ivan, otdoxni, u tebjja golova bolit*, (lit. 'Ivan, rest, you have a headache'). In my opinion this is a syntactic problem. In the first sentence, the modification ('because of your headache') directly modifies the imperative action, whereas in the second sentence, the modification occurs as a separate clause. In the case of a direction the speaker wants the hearer to fulfill the imperative action. The specification *iz-za golovnoj boli* ('because of your headache') cannot, however, be seen as part of the action that the speaker wants the addressee to fulfill. As such, it cannot be part of the linguistic expression of the direction.

### 3.2.2.2 Impulse to realize or impulse to keep on realizing

By using the imperative the speaker hopes to contribute to the realization of the imperative action. Normally it only makes sense to direct someone to fulfill an action if this person is not already performing this action when the imperative is uttered. In some sentences, however, the imperfective imperative is used when the addressee is already performing the imperative action at the moment of speaking, for example:

- (18) **Sidite, sidite**, pozhalujsta.  
sit-IMP-IMPERF-2PL, sit-IMP-IMPERF-2PL, please  
'Please, remain seated.'

In this case the speaker wants the addressee to *continue* the imperative action. Birjulin (1994) argues that the Russian imperative has two basic meanings, viz. 'change V', and 'continue V'. I do not think, however, that it is either necessary or possible to separate such meanings. The idea of continuation arises in those cases where the speaker needs to express that he wants the imperative action to be realized. Such cases only occur if the addressee can be expected to stop performing the action, or when the speaker wants to assure the addressee that he won't interfere with the realization of the action. This is the case for example in the following sentence, given in Birjulin (1994: 49):

- (19) Zanimaetes’? Vot èto s vashej storony, mus’ju, prekrasno, chto vy zanimaetes’. Nu, zanimajtes’, ja ne budu vam meshat’. (...). (Kuprin)  
you.work? well that from your side, monsieur, terrific, that you work. well, work-IMP-IMPERF-PL, I not will you bother (...)  
‘Are you busy? Well, for you, monsieur, it’s terrific that you are working. Keep on working, I won’t disturb you.’

Birjulin (1994: 49) correctly remarks that the ‘continuation’ interpretation occurs in those pragmatic contexts where the speaker informs the addressee that he will not direct the addressee to realize not V.

A counter-argument to the claim that the idea of continuation cannot be seen as a separate meaning, or does not have to be accounted for in the basic meaning of the directive imperative, might be that in other languages, such as Dutch, the imperative is not easily used to express direction to continue an action. A sentence like (18) would be translated into Dutch with an imperative of the verb *blijven* (‘remain’), and not with an imperative of the verb *zitten* (‘sit’). I do not think, however, that such facts must be seen as arguments to speak of different *meanings*. I would rather say that the specific possibilities of use fall naturally within the framework provided by the basic meaning, but that the actual way in which a language uses these possibilities is conventional. Such differences in use of imperatives in different languages may possibly be attributed to differences in the linguistic system, such as the existence of morphological aspect in Russian, the existence of particles in Dutch that do not occur in Russian, and differences in distribution between the imperative and its oppositional form, the infinitive, in Russian and Dutch. To give an example: it may be that in Russian the idea of continuation does not have to be expressed by a specific lexical verb similar to *blijven* (‘remain’), because of the strong association of the imperfective aspect with the idea of continuation.

In some special cases the idea of ‘continuation’ arises in contexts where the imperative action is not at all controllable, and where consequently no intention can be ascribed to the addressee to stop performing the action. This is the case for example in (17) above, where we find the verb *muchat’sja* (‘suffer’). I analyze such cases as special interpretations of the basic imperative meaning, where the idea of direction to continue an action is weakened, but is still partly present because the imperative action is naturally evaluated in a negative way by the performer (the addressee). This means that in such cases one may presuppose that the addressee *would* like to stop performing the action. I will discuss such sentences in 3.2.4.2.

## 3.2.2.3 Speaker commitment

If the speaker uses the directive imperative, he commits himself to wishing or accepting the fulfillment of the action. The actual attitude of the speaker toward the action may, however, be different. In some cases the speaker *wishes* the realization of the action, but in other cases the speaker *permits* the addressee to realize the action. If we look at the imperative, it seems that different uses can be distinguished on the grounds of the *type* of direction, as is remarked by Bondarko & Bulanin, who claim that: “[t]he meaning of instruction can be realized in language in different shades. It can be a request, appeal, order, prescription, advice, exhortation, entreaty, and so on. All these shades are determined by the conversational situation, the intention and the emotional attitude of the speaker” (1967: 127).<sup>14</sup>

The different directive types as given by Bondarko & Bulanin (*pros’ba, sovet, mol’ba* etc.) are not unique to the Russian imperative system, but occur in other languages as well. Donhauser (1986) gives an analysis for the German imperative, and claims that the occurrence of the different directive types can be explained by the different evaluations (by the speaker) of (future) action possibilities of the hearer, which can be evaluated from two points of view: (a) from the perspective of the speaker’s interest and (b) from the perspective of the hearer’s interest (which is known or supposed by the speaker). On the basis of this model, Donhauser makes a division into four directive types: *Aufforderung, Rat/Warnung, Angebot/Drohung* and *Erlaubnis*.

Donhauser’s explanation of the four imperative types is very similar to that of Xrakovskij & Volodin (1986) for the Russian imperative. Xrakovskij & Volodin claim that “[i]n order to distinguish and classify these interpretations, it is necessary to take into account the relation between the participants in the illocutionary act and their attitude toward the caused act” (Xrakovskij & Volodin, 1986: 136).<sup>15</sup> To analyze the different directive types Xrakovskij & Volodin look at the following features:

- A – Who is the giver of the causational impulse (A or S)?
- A1 – S is the giver of the causational impulse

---

<sup>14</sup> “[z]nachenie pobuzhdenija realizuetsja v rechi v razlichnyx ottenkax. Èto mozhet byt’ pros’ba, prizyv, prikazanie, predpisanie, sovet, uveshchanie, mol’ba i t.p. Vse èti ottenki opredelajutsja situaciej rechi, namerenijem i emocional’nym otnoshenijem govorničeskoj.”

<sup>15</sup> “Dlja togo chtoby vydelit’ i klassificirovat’ èti interpretacii, neobxodimo uchityvat’ kak otnoshenija mezdu uchastnikami rečevogo akta, tak i ix otnoshenija k kauziruemomu dejstvuju.”

- A2 – A is the giver of the causational impulse
- B – In whose interest is the imperative action (A or S)?
- B1 – realization of the action is in the interest of S
- B2 – realization of the action is in the interest of A
- C – What is the hierarchical relation between S and A?
- C1 – S considers himself to be higher in the hierarchical system
- C2 – S does not consider himself to be higher in the hierarchical system

On the ground of these features Xrakovskij & Volodin make a distinction between *prikaz* (order), *pros'ba* (request), *instrukcija* (instruction), *predloženie* (suggestion), *razreshenie* (permission) and *sovet* (advice). This is made clear in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1

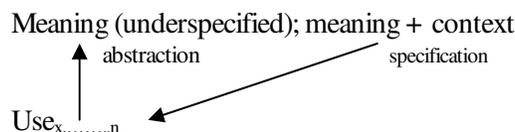
| Types             | Classificational features and their meaning |          |               |
|-------------------|---|----------|---------------|
|                   | Causational impulse                         | Interest | Subordination |
| Order             | A1  | B1       | C1            |
| Request           | A1  | B1       | C2            |
| Instruction       | A1  | B2       | C1            |
| Suggestion        | A1  | B2       | C2            |
| Permission        | A2  | B2       | C1            |
| Advice            | A2  | B2       | C2            |
| Not interpretable | A2  | B1       | C1            |
| Not interpretable | A2  | B1       | C2            |

The analysis of Xrakovskij & Volodin (1986) is basically the same as that of Donhauser. In both analyses the different directive types occur as the result of the specific speaker-addressee context. We can say that the evaluation by the speaker of (future) action possibilities of the hearer in Donhauser's analysis can be identified with the causational impulse in the analysis of Xrakovskij & Volodin. Furthermore, both analyses take account of whose interest the action is in. In contrast to Donhauser, however, Xrakovskij & Volodin take the hierarchical relation between the speaker and the addressee into account. Xrakovskij & Volodin can therefore differentiate between *prikaz* and *pros'ba*, whereas Donhauser only speaks of *Aufforderung* (which has to include both).

It is interesting to see that although both analyses are basically the same in that they define the different directive types by the same features, the explanation of the specific

types is not the same. Take for example *permission* and *advice* in the case of Xrakovskij & Volodin. According to them in both cases the giver of the causational impulse is the hearer, and in both cases the action is in the interest of the hearer. The only difference is that in the case of permission the speaker has a higher hierarchical status relative to the hearer, and in the case of advice the speaker has a lower or equal hierarchical status relative to the hearer. Donhauser, however, thinks the giver of the impulse in the case of advice (*Rat*) to be the speaker, whereas in the case of permission (*Erlaubnis*) her explanation is similar to that of Xrakovskij & Volodin. It could be that Donhauser's advice is not the same as the advice of Xrakovskij & Volodin.<sup>16</sup> I do not want to go further into the analysis of the different types of direction here, but I would like to point out that some imperative cases cannot be seen as clear-cut examples of one of the four types, which is a reason to regard these types as *interpretations* of one directive meaning. This is also stated by Xrakovskij & Volodin: "(...) we think that the imperative has one meaning – direct volition of the speaker directed at the performance of the action mentioned by him." (1986: 136)<sup>17</sup> The different interpretations can be seen as *specifications* of this meaning, which can, in some cases, be classified according to some linguistic expression (e.g. order, advice, etc.), as is shown in Figure 3.7.

Figure 3.7



<sup>16</sup> Donhauser (1986) probably does not make the distinction between *instrukcija* and *sovet* in the sense of Xrakovskij & Volodin (1986). Note, however, that in my opinion analyses like these are, at least to some extent, arbitrary, since I can well imagine contexts where the speaker is higher in the hierarchical structure than the addressee, yet still advises the addressee to do something. Of course, it could be argued that in that case the speaker acts *as if* he is not higher in the hierarchical structure, but I do not find this a very convincing argument. Whether something is advice depends on the definition of the term 'advice'. A definition of such a term on the basis of the parameters given above is inherently fuzzy, since these parameters themselves are not discrete (why, for example, is it not possible that the action is in the interest of both the speaker and the addressee?)

<sup>17</sup> "(...) my schitaem, chto imperativ imeet odno znachenie – prjamoe voleiz"javlenie govornjashchego otnositel'no ispolnenija nazyvajemogo im dejstvija." (Xrakovskij & Volodin, 1986: 136)

Although the basic meaning of the imperative can be said to be underspecified in relation to the parameters mentioned above (causational impulse, relation of speaker-hearer, etc.), these specifications cannot be seen as meanings themselves. The difference between an order and permission cannot be analyzed in terms of decomposing the 'order' concept into subfeatures and extending this to a permission case by selecting and backgrounding of features. The features that constitute the differences between a case of permission and an order cannot be attributed to differences in conceptualization but are differences in use, and are attributed by the context. For a more detailed analysis of such interpretations I refer the reader to Birjulin (1994).

#### 3.2.2.4 The notion of 'directivity' and oppositional forms

The specific *directive* meaning of the imperative can best be explained by comparison with *oppositional* forms. Directive imperatives can in some contexts be paraphrased with modal verbs like *xotet'* ('want') and *dolzhen* ('must') and with infinitives. The difference between the directive imperative and its oppositional forms is that the directive imperative has a *directive meaning*, whereas the oppositional forms have a *directive interpretation*. Put differently, in the case of a form like the infinitive, the directive use must be seen as a special function of a more basic conceptual notion (viz. 'situation type'), whereas in the case of the imperative, the function of direction is directly part of the basic conceptual structure.

In some contexts the directive imperative can be paraphrased with modal verbs like *xotet'* ('want') and *dolzhen* ('must'):

(20) Ja xochu chtoby ty prochital knigu.  
I want that you read book  
'I want you to read the book.'

(21) Ty dolzhen prochitat' knigu.  
you must read book  
'You have to read the book.'

In these cases, however, the feature of direction is not expressed by the form itself, but is attributed by situational or contextual factors. Therefore you can say:

(22) Ja xochu chtoby ty prochital knigu, no ja znaju chto ty ètogo ne budesh' delat'.  
'I want you to read the book, but I know you won't do it.'

- (23) Ty dolzhen pročitat' knigu, no ja znaju čto ty ètogo ne budesh' delat'.  
 'You have to read the book, but I know you won't do it.'

But not:

- (24) ?Pročitaj knigu, no ja znaju čto ty etogo ne budesh' delat'.  
 'Read the book, but I know you won't do it.'

It can be argued that these oppositional forms lack a directive *meaning* but can have a directive *interpretation*.

The directive meaning of the imperative is underlined by some other specific features. Bondarko (1990: 190) remarks that the imperative cannot be accompanied by modal subjective words like *vozmožno* ('possibly'), *mne kažetsja* ('it seems to me'), *po ix mneniju* ('according to them') etc. (\**po ix mneniju risuj xorosho*). The imperative cannot be used in subordinate clauses with *čto* ('that'), (\**On skazal čto risuj xorosho*); in such cases the subjunctive (*čtoby* and a past tense) is used (*On skazal, čtoby ja risoval xorosho*). These features indicate that the directive imperative can only be used in the direct speaker-addressee context, where the speaker, by using the imperative, gives an impulse to the addressee to realize the imperative situation.

The importance of the notion of direction can be shown if we compare the directive imperative with the infinitive, which can also be used as a directive, especially in orders and in the case of general statements like recipes (Maurice, 1996: 166/ 7). Although the infinitive can be seen as an oppositional form – both the imperative and the infinitive can be used as directives – they do not have exactly the same meaning, and hence not exactly the same distribution of use. In the case of the imperative the addressee is directed to imagine the imperative situation and consequently to perform this situation, whereas in the case of the infinitive the directive use is an interpretation of the more general meaning 'situation type'. The idea of directivity or instruction is not part of the infinitive meaning but must be seen as an interpretation in a certain pragmatic context, viz. that which provides a direction. The infinitive cannot for example be used in permissive directive contexts like the following:

- (25) Možno otkryt' okno?  
 'May I open the door?'  
 Otkryvajte  
 open-IMP

'Yes go ahead.'  
\*Otkryvat'  
open-INF

The imperative expresses that the addressee is permitted to perform the imperative action. This means that the addressee wants to perform the action and that by giving an impulse the speaker makes it possible for the addressee to realize the imperative action. The infinitive expresses that the action type 'open' is the appropriate action type (and not another action type). This is not compatible with the permissive context, where it is the addressee that intends to fulfill the imperative action, or put differently, where the addressee defines the appropriate action type.<sup>18</sup>

Another context where the imperative can normally not be paraphrased with an infinitive is the conditional context. I think this is because the infinitive does not express the idea of directivity, and consequently lacks the feature of 'imagination'. I will go into this in 3.2.4.1.

### 3.2.3 Semantic-syntactic features

Above I have discussed the meaning of the basic directive imperative use. In this description I abstracted from some of the specific semantic-syntactic features of the directive use. For the directive imperative, the following semantic-syntactic features are relevant:

- (i) +aspect (perfective/ imperfective)
- (ii) –tense
- (iii) possibility of expressing subject (*ty/ vy*)
- (iv) +suffix *-te* in the case of second person plural (*vy*)
- (v) combinable with negation ((*nikogda*) *ne*)
- (vi) combinable with clitic/ suffix *-ka*
- (vii) no fixed word order
- (viii) occurrence of imperative complements

---

<sup>18</sup> Note that Bricyn (1990: 255) gives the following example from Zoshchenko of a directive infinitive with a permissive reading: *Vygruzhat', chto li? – Konečno, vygruzhat', – skazal mužik, ne do letu lezhat' tovaru.* ('Shall I unload or not? Of course you should unload, said the man, the goods cannot lie there till summer.') In this case the permissive character is made possible by the interrogative character of the sentence: the speaker asks if the action type expressed by the infinitive is the appropriate one.

I will here briefly discuss these semantic-syntactic features of the imperative; for the absence of tense see 3.1.

### 3.2.3.1 Aspect

In Russian, aspect is a morphological category, which means that verbs occur either in the perfective or in the imperfective aspect. Frequently pairs of perfective or imperfective verbs share all or most of their lexical meaning; in such cases an aspectual opposition occurs. Directive imperatives occur with both aspects. Xrakovskij (1988) argues that the following factors are important in studying the aspect of the directive imperative: (i) the meaning of the perfective and imperfective aspect, (ii) the different types of direction (order, wish, advice, etc.), and (iii) the situational context and the social relation between the speaker and the addressee. He further argues that the following features are important in the aspectual choice: (a) presence or absence of negation, (b) singularity/ non-singularity of the action, (c) process character or non-process character of the action, (d) type of direction (factual/ permissive/ wish). In his study Xrakovskij (1988) shows that features such as the controllability of the action, the presence of specific indicators of time, and pragmatic context are important in the choice of aspect.

In this study I will discuss and analyze the aspect of the imperative only in relation to the main question of this analysis, viz. how the different imperative uses are related to one another. For a general and extensive discussion of aspect in general I refer the reader to Forsyth (1970) and Barentsen (1985), and for a discussion of aspect in the case of directive imperatives, to Xrakovskij (1988) and Paducheva (1996).

### 3.2.3.2 Valency structure, subjecthood, and word order

The imperative is a verb, and as such has the typical valency structure of verbs. This means that depending on the specific valency structure of the lexical meaning of the verb in question, the imperative can occur with different types of syntactic arguments such as subject, object, indirect object, instrumental object, etc. The directive imperative clause has no fixed word order, but seems to follow the general pragmatic principles of word order for Russian. As I will argue below, the word order of the imperative sentence, or more specifically the order of the verb relative to the subject (VS, SV, or V), is related to the specific type of imperative directivity.

A special position in the valency structure of the imperative is taken by the *agent* of the situation. The directive imperative *always* evokes the thought of an agent or performer of the action; in the case of the directive use the agent of the action is identified with the addressee. The addressee may be formally expressed by a second person pronoun in the nominative:

- (26) Ty ej prosto **skazhi** chto ty ee ljubish' i xochesh' pocelovat'.  
you-NOM her just tell-IMP-PERF that you her love and want kiss  
'Just tell her that you love her and want to kiss her.'

In the majority of cases, however, the addressee is not expressed. In such cases the identity of the addressee can be inferred from the context.

When the addressee can be identified with a second person plural (*vy*), the suffix *-te* has to be added to the verb unless a group of people is seen as a collective:

- (27) a. **Pishite!**  
write-IMP-IMPERF-PL  
'Write!'
- b. – Nu, rebjata, – skazal komendant, – teper' **otvorjaj** vorota, bej v baraban. (Barentsen, *forthcoming* Pushkin)  
well, guys, said commander, now open-IMP-IMPERF gate, beat-IMP-IMPERF drum  
'“Well guys”, said the commander, “now open the gate and beat the drum.”'

This suffix *-te* can be seen as an agreement-feature between the verb and the expressed or non-expressed agent of the imperative situation, since the expression or idea of a second person plural subject always agrees with the expression of *-te*. In this case the difference between a plural agent (expressible by *vy*) and a singular agent (expressible by *ty*), and consequently the expression or non-expression of *-te*, may be related to a modification of the *type* of impulse, since the hierarchical relation between speaker and addressee is an important factor in the type of directivity.

The directive imperative can also occur with the pronoun *kto-nibud'* ('someone'):

- (28) Teper' **poprobuj**-ka kto-nibud' slovo **skazhi**. (Veyrenc, 1980: 94)  
now try-IMP-PERF-PRT someone-NOM word say-IMP-PERF  
'Now one of you just try to say a word [meaning: don't do that, because if you do there will be negative consequences for you].'

Such cases can be seen as directives because the pronoun *kto-nibud'* refers to a specific but non-specified person in the immediate speaker-addressee context ('one of you').

Something should be said here about the semantic-syntactic status of the nominative pronoun in the case of the directive imperative. Some scholars define the pronoun as the *subject* of the sentence (e.g. Yokoyama, 1986; Dippong, 1995). Others, such as Isachenko (1982), argue that one cannot in this case speak of a grammatical subject, but rather of a vocative pronoun (*obrasbchenie*).<sup>19</sup> Of course, whether or not one can really speak of a subject in this case depends on the particular definition of subject employed. It is preferable to ask *why* the case of the pronoun is nominative, and *why* the pronoun is expressed in some cases, and not in others.

In my opinion the pronoun occurs in the nominative case because the function of the nominative is to identify some referent, which is the imagined agent of the imperative action. As such, the imperative can indeed be seen as a predicate of the pronoun-subject. (See 3.1 for a more detailed analysis.) In contrast to regular subjects, however, the nominative pronoun is not only the subject of the lexical verb, but also expresses the identity of the addressee to whom the impulse is directed. The referent of the pronoun thus has a more independent character, and shows similarities to a vocative. In some cases the vocative character is emphasized by the information structure of the sentence, e.g.:

- (29) Slushaj, ty, rasserdilsja korol' (...). (Barentsen, *forthcoming* A. Schmidt)  
listen-IMP-IMPERF, you, said.angrily king  
'You there, listen to me, said the king angrily.'
- (30) Ne fyrkaj, ty! – skazal emu Rèdrik. (A. & B. Strugackie, *Piknik na oboshchine*)  
not belch-IMP-IMPERF, you! – said him Rèdrik  
'Don't belch!', said Redrik.'
- (31) Ty, Mak, pomeshivaj, pomeshivaj. Smotri, esli prigorit. (A. & B. Strugackie, *Obitaemyj Ostrov*)  
you, Mak, stir.from.time.to.time-IMP-PERF, stir.from.time.to.time-IMP-PERF. look, if  
burns  
'Max, stir from time to time. Be careful not to let it burn.'

---

<sup>19</sup> In Russian there is no formal difference between a nominative or vocative noun.

In (29) the addressee is first directed to realize the imperative situation, and subsequently the identity of the addressee is made explicit. In all these sentences the subject (pro-)noun forms a separate informational unit (indicated by commas).

The function of the noun may be to contrast the agent with other persons or actions:

- (32) Ty **posidi** 10 minut, a **ja** podnimus' dvumja ètazhami vyshe.<sup>20</sup>  
you sit-IMP-PERF 10 minutes, but I go.upstairs two floors higher  
'You sit down for ten minutes, while I go two floors up.'

Another function mentioned in the literature, is the modification of the strength and character of the direction. It is further argued that the *order* of the predicate and the subject plays an important part in the way the expression of the subject modifies the strength of the direction. Concerning the meaning of the order of the imperative and the subject, however, opinions differ. Dippong (1995: 53) cites Shaxmatov, who argues that the order [pronouns<sub>S</sub> + IMP<sub>V</sub>] occurs in the case of a categorical order, whereas [IMP<sub>V</sub> + pronouns<sub>S</sub>] must be seen as a weakened case of instruction. Vinogradov (cited in Dippong, 1995: 53), however, argues that [IMP<sub>V</sub> + pronouns<sub>S</sub>] must be seen as a strong request.

In my opinion, the analysis of the function of an expressed agent in the case of the imperative, and the function of word order should not be based on a notion such as 'weakening or strengthening of the direction'. Such an analysis is insufficient because (i) it does not make the right predictions (some sentences with an SV order have a 'strong' directive character, while others have a 'weak' character), and (ii) it remains unclear how one can motivate this supposed function of word order in terms of the function of word order in general.

Instead, I would like to suggest that the SV order occurs in those cases where there is some implicit contrast with another action (which means that the imperative verb, or one of the constituents of the verbal phrase, is accented), and where the (need for the) realization of some action may be presupposed. Such contexts are often constituted by adverbs such as *luchshe* ('better') or *tol'ko* ('only') which presuppose the idea of contrast. Consider the following sentences:

- (33) Ty **luchshe uspokojsja** i **rasskazhi** vse po porjadku.<sup>21</sup> (V. Loginov, *Shagovaja ulica*)  
you better calm.down-IMP-PERF and tell-IMP-PERF all in order  
'You'd better calm down and tell everything in the right order.'

---

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.anekdot.ru:8084/an/an9803/t980303.html>

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.litera.ru:8085/slova/loginov/tript6.htm>

- (34) Tol'ko vy mne skazhite chestno: bol'shaja ja ili malen'kaja? (K. Bulychev, *Vojna s liliputami*)  
 just you me tell honestly: big I or small?  
 'Just tell me honestly, am I big or small?'

In (33) the speaker expresses that in the given circumstances the best action for the addressee is to do X (=calm down), and not some other given or implied action; such sentences have the character of advice. In (34) the speaker expresses that he wants the addressee to *perform* just one particular action (and not another one); in this case there is a contrast between the imperative action, and the set of expected actions. The idea of contrast may also be interpreted differently, as in the following examples:

- (35) Net, ty ne otvorachivajsja, ne otvorachivajsja! – rasserdilas' babushka. (ibid.)  
 no, you not turn.around-IMP-IMPERF, not turn.around-IMP-IMPERF said.angrily  
 old.woman  
 "No, don't turn around, don't turn around!", said the old woman angrily.'

This sentence expresses that the speaker thinks that the given action of the addressee is inappropriate, and that the addressee should do not X; in this sentence there is a contrast between the given situation and the negation of the imperative action. The idea of contrast is also clear in the following example, where the speaker explicitly expresses that the addressee should *perform* action X, instead of action Y:

- (36) E-e ... – Nikolin'ka zamorgal. – A pochemu takoj vopros? Ty otvechaj, a ne pochemuchkaj.<sup>22</sup> (O. Postnov, *Pesochnoe vremja*)  
 Eh, Nikolin'ka started.to.blink. but why such question? you answer-IMP-IMPERF, and not ask.why-IMP-IMPERF  
 "Eh", Nikolin'ka started to blink. "But why such a question? You should answer, and not ask why."

In my opinion the expression of the subject in these sentences, and the particular order can possibly be motivated as follows. In sentences where no subject is expressed, the speaker focuses on the realization of the imperative action; the identity of the subject of this action is inferred from the immediate context. In the sentences with SV order the subject is expressed because the focus is not on the immediate realization of the action

<sup>22</sup> <http://litera.ru:8085/slova/postnov/pv/osa.htm>

(‘I want this now’), but on the specific identity of the action, or circumstances of realization of the action, by the given subject. Sentences with a SV order first express that there is some subject, which presupposes an action that the subject performs, while the identity of the action is given later. This means that the assumption that the subject is the agent of some implicitly or explicitly given other action is negated. These sentences express that as far as the subject is concerned, he should realize the imperative situation (and not another situation).

Besides sentences without expressed subject, and sentences with a SV order, there are sentences with a VS order; such cases are less frequent than those cases with an SV order (Barentsen, *forthcoming*). Some examples are given below:

- (37) **Zabud’te vy** sejchas i ob ètoj tvari, i o korabljax. Ne èto glavnoe.<sup>23</sup> (A. Bushkov, *Letajushchie ostrova*)  
forget-IMP-PERF-PL you-NOM now and about that creature, and about ships. not that main.thing  
‘You’d better forget about that creature and about the ships. They are not important.’
- (38) **Otec Kabani, bud’te ljubezny, voz’mite vy** moix loshadej i otvedite ix k baronu Pampe.<sup>24</sup> (A. & B. Strugackie, *Trudno byt’ bogom*)  
father Kabani, be-IMP good, take-IMP-PERF-PL you-NOM my horses and bring-IMP-PL them to Baron Pampa  
‘Father Kabani, be so good as to take my horses and bring them to Baron Pampa.’
- (39) **Da skazhi ty mne** nakonec, – ty menja ljubish’?<sup>25</sup> (V. Nabokov, *Masben’ka*)  
yes say-IMP-PERF you-NOM me at.last, you me love?  
‘Tell me finally, do you love me?’
- (40) – **Ubirajsja ty** ot menja! – vzvizgnula ona (Barentsen, *forthcoming*/ Dostoevskij)  
beat.it-IMP-IMPERF you-NOM from me! cried she  
‘‘Beat it’’, she cried.’

I suspect that sentences with a VS order can be seen as directive cases where the expression of the subject has the character of an afterthought or addition. This means that the verb in such sentences is similar in character to the imperative in subjectless

---

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.kuzbass.ru/moshkow/lat/RUFANT/BUSHKOW/ostrow.txt>

<sup>24</sup> [http://www.moshkow.pp.ru:5000/lat/STRUGACKIE/be\\_god.txt](http://www.moshkow.pp.ru:5000/lat/STRUGACKIE/be_god.txt)

<sup>25</sup> <http://lib.nordnet.ru/lat/NABOKOW/mary.txt>

cases (the speaker focuses on the realization of the action expressed by V), but that the speaker further adds the identity of the addressee to the information given by V. The addition of the identity of the agent may be typical of cases of advice where the expression of the subject creates a personal attitude toward the addressee, and of cases where the speaker wishes to emphasize the identity of the agent (as in ((29), (30)) above). The addition of the agent also seems to be further typical of cases where the speaker expresses his wish that the imperative situation be realized, but cannot control the addressee.<sup>26</sup> The relation between VS order and the interpretation of ‘wish’ requires further analysis.

### 3.2.3.3 Negation

The imperative can be combined with negation, as in *Mal’chik, ne čitaj ètu knigu* (‘Boy, don’t read this book’). Such sentences are called ‘prohibitive’ in the literature (cf. Xrakovskij & Volodin (1986: 93, 150), who distinguish between prohibitive and preventive negative sentences). In the case of (prohibitive) negation the speaker directs the addressee not to perform the imperative action.

Xrakovskij & Volodin (1986: 89–96) argue that in the case of the negative directive imperative there is no simple accordance between the semantic and the formal structure of the sentence. According to them, the meaning of the imperative can be decomposed into the features ‘direction of the speaker’, ‘taking place’ and the meaning of the lexical verb. In their syntactic schema the negation must be applied to the feature ‘taking place’, and not to the feature direction. I think, however, that it is questionable whether the meaning of the imperative can be decomposed into different separate meaning components in this way. If there is something like a directive ‘component’ of the meaning of the imperative, I do not see how this component could in any way be negated since uttering the imperative *always* means manipulating in some way or another. Whether the negation must be applied to the lexical verb (direction to perform not X), or whether it must be applied to the idea of taking place (direction to not perform X), makes no difference, as they extensionally amount to the same thing.<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>26</sup> Note that in the case of the optative imperative we also find VS order, and that in most necessitive cases we find an SV order.

<sup>27</sup> Note, however, that there may be conceptual differences in the way different types of directives are used with negation. I suspect that in this respect there are important differences between the infinitive and the imperative.

### 3.2.3.4 The clitic *-ka*

The imperative can be accompanied by the clitic *-ka*. For the use and function of this particle I refer the reader to Levontina (1991); I will confine myself here to a few observations. The clitic *-ka* can be combined with imperatives, analytical imperative constructions (with *pust'*, *daj* and *davaj*), with the first person perfective present, with the directive use of the past tense, with the directive use of the first person plural, with some interjections (*nu*), and in specific contexts with the infinitive. In all these contexts these forms have a directive character. Like any clitic, *-ka* is attached to some other form, and cannot be accented. In the case of the imperative, *-ka* is usually attached to the imperative form. In some cases the form *-ka* is attached to the particle *nu*, instead of to the imperative form. If the suffix *-te* is expressed, this suffix forms a unit with the imperative, which means that *-ka* is attached to this unit.

About the meaning of the suffix, opinions differ (see Xrakovskij & Volodin, 1986: 179). Xrakovskij & Volodin (1986: 183) remark that *-ka* is only used when the speaker can be seen as the causational impulse (it is not used in permissives, where the hearer can be seen as the causational impulse), where the social status of the speaker is the same as or higher than that of the hearer, and where the speaker has a friendly relation with the hearer. They describe the function of the particle as modifying (weakening/ strengthening) the instruction, by expressing the informal and spontaneous relationship between the speaker and the hearer. Levontina (1991) gives a more detailed analysis of the meaning of the particle. She also emphasizes the spontaneous nature of the meaning of the clitic, stating that the thought or need to do the action just occurred to the speaker. Barentsen (forthcoming) further notes that the particle is used in cases where the speaker wants the immediate realization of the imperative situation.

The suffix *-ka* seems to function as a support of the impulse to immediately realize the imperative situation. Such an extra support is needed if it can be expected that the addressee will not perform the action without this extra support. This means that the suffix cannot be used in the case of permissives, where the addressee already intends to realize the imperative action. A reason to support the impulse to realize the imperative situation may be that the speaker challenges the addressee to perform the imperative situation, as in (28) above, or that the speaker wants the addressee to perform the imperative action, whereas the addressee still shows no sign of performing the action:

- (41) **Pogljadite-ka** skoree, skazal Anton. (Barentsen, *forthcoming*/ Mulisch)  
look-IMP-PERF-PRT faster, said Anton  
“Come on, hurry up, have a look”, said Anton.’

- (42) Èlli rezko obryvaet ego: – **Pomolchi-ka**, morjak! Nichego smeshnogo. (Barentsen, *forthcoming*)  
 Elly sharply interrupts him: be.silent-IMP-PERF-PRT, sailor! nothing funny  
 ‘Elly sharply cuts him off: “Be silent, you sailor! There is nothing funny about it.”’
- (43) Ty **pogljadi-ka** luchshe, Mashek, chto tut u menja v sumochke priпасeno!<sup>28</sup>(V. Loginov, *Shagovaja Ulica*)  
 you look-IMP-PERF-PRT better, Mashek, what here at me in bag stored  
 ‘You’d better look, Mashek, at what I stored in my bag.’

The idea of supporting the impulse may also be that the speaker wants to stimulate the addressee to *come forward* and perform the action. In such cases the expression of *-ka* creates a feeling of ‘solidarity’:

- (44) A **skazhi-ka**, Mak: ty mog by mne sdelat’ ljubeznost’?<sup>29</sup> (O. Postnov, *Pesochnoe vremja*)  
 but tell-IMP-PERF-PRT, Mak, you can IRR me do favor?  
 ‘But tell me Mak, can you do me a favor?’
- (45) – Nina, **pokazhi-ka** tvoi risunki, predlozhila Milicija Ivanovna.<sup>30</sup> (G. Klimov, *Imja moe legion*)  
 Nina, show-IMP-PERF-PRT your drawings, suggested Milicija Ivanovna  
 “Nina, why don’t you show your drawings”, suggested Milicija Ivanovna.’

It must be noted that in comparison with a language like Dutch, in Russian the imperative is not used with many different modifying particles. In Dutch the expression of particles (*dan*, *maar*, *eens*, *toch*, and *nou*) is necessary to modify the strength of the direction; without these particles the imperative direction would be felt as rude or too categorical. In Russian, the imperative form itself does not need the expression of these particles to soften or modify the strength of the direction, probably owing to the presence of morphological aspect.

---

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.litera.ru:8085/slova/loginov/tript7.htm>

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.litera.ru:8085/slova/postnov/pv/author.htm>

<sup>30</sup> [http://moshkow.relline.ru:5000/lat/PROZA/KLIMOV\\_GP/legion.txt](http://moshkow.relline.ru:5000/lat/PROZA/KLIMOV_GP/legion.txt)

### 3.2.3.5 Complement

In Russian two directive imperatives may be combined without conjunction in sentences where the second imperative is semantically a complement to the first, as in (28) above. This construction with two directive imperatives is used to indicate that the speaker wants the addressee to perform one action, which is conceptualized as two different actions. Note that a similar phenomenon also occurs with other moods in Russian, for example with the perfective present and verbs of motion such as *pojti* ('go'):

- (46) Ja pojdu postavlju čaj, – skazala Alisa. (K. Bulichev, *Vojna s liliputami*)  
I go-PRES-PERF put-PRES-PERF tea, said Alisa  
'I'll go and make some tea', said Alisa.'

A similar phenomenon occurs in sentences like the following:

- (47) Smotri, ne upadi! (Dippong, 1995: 56)  
look-IMP-IMPERF, not fall-IMP-IMPERF  
'Be careful not to fall.'

I do not agree with Dippong (1995: 56) that in this case one can speak of embedding; in this sentence the speaker directs the addressee to be careful, and consequently not to fall.

In the preceding sections I have discussed the *basic* imperative meaning. In some special contexts this basic directive meaning is changed or reinterpreted under the influence of the context in which the form occurs. In the following section I will discuss these uses.

### 3.2.4 Derived uses

Besides the *basic* directive uses, one can also speak of *derived* or *adjusted* uses. Some examples of such uses are given below:

- (48) Pusti babu v raj, a ona korovu za soboj vedet. (Mazon, 1914: 93/ proverb)  
let-IMP-PERF this woman into paradise, but she cow with her will.take  
'Let a woman into paradise, and she will still take her cow with her.'
- (49) Tol'ko **poprobuj!** Ja tebjja pridushu, – otvetil chelovek, kotoryj ee derzhal. (K. Bulychev, *Vojna s liliputami*)

just try-IMP-PERF! I you strangle, answered man, that her held  
 “Just try! I will strangle you”, answered the man that held her.’

- (50) **Muchajsja!** Ne nado delat’ takie gluposti! (Barentsen, *forthcoming*)  
 suffer-IMP-IMPERF! not necessary do-INF such stupid.things  
 ‘Yes suffer! You shouldn’t have been so stupid.’
- (51) Večerom (...) na nee napal kashel’. – Ne **begaj** bosikom po rose! – zataratorila Katja (...).  
 (Barentsen, *forthcoming*/ Iskander)  
 in.the.evening (...) on her fell cold. – not run-IMP barefoot in dew! cried Katja (...)  
 ‘During that evening she caught a cold. “You shouldn’t have run barefoot in the dew!”  
 cried Katja [...]’
- (52) Sdelaem more – i u nas mel’nica elektricheskaja budet. A ja, kak provedut tok, priemnik  
 kuplju. Na vse volny **nastraivaj!** (Vasil’eva, 1969: 40)  
 we.will.make sea and at us windmill electric will.be. but I, when they.bring electricity,  
 transistor will.buy. to all frequencies turn.in-IMP-IMPERF!  
 ‘We will make a sea, and we will have an electric windmill. And as soon as there is  
 electricity, I will buy a transistor. Just tune in to all the frequencies!’

The use of the imperative in (48) and (49) clashes with the *performance* character, because the speaker does not want the addressee to perform the action, but only to imagine the action. The use of the imperative in (50) clashes with the *future time character* because the addressee is already performing the action at the moment of speaking. The use of the imperative in (51) clashes with the future time character because it expresses that the agent should not have performed the action; this means that the direction is aimed at/ motivated by a past action. The use of the imperative in (52) clashes with the idea that the speaker wants the realization of the imperative situation by a specific addressee present in the speech situation.

The new uses have to be interpreted; that is, if the already established concept – the basic meaning given earlier – were related to the world, it would partly clash with the new situation. To integrate this new use into the conceptual structure, some features are selected while others are backgrounded relative to some context. Below I will discuss the peripheral uses mentioned above: the conditional use, the ‘reinforcement use’, the non-future cases, and the cases with a generic agent.

### 3.2.4.1 Conditional-concessive use

In the case of the prototypical directive use the addressee is instructed to *perform* the imperative action. In some cases there is not so much an instruction to perform a certain action, but much more to imagine a certain situation:

- (53) **Pusti** babu v raj, a ona korovu za soboj vedet. (Mazon, 1914: 93/ proverb)  
let-IMP-PERF woman in paradise, but she cow with her will.take  
'Let a woman into paradise, and she will still take her cow with her.'
- (54) [A] **prosi** u nego, kak proji k fabrike – on tebja obol'et prezreniem s nog do golovy.  
(Barentsen, *forthcoming*/ A. & B. Strugackie, *Gadkie lebedi*)  
but ask-IMP-PERF at him, how go to factory, he you will.pour.over with.contempt from  
feet till head  
'But ask him how to get to the factory, and he will look at you contemptuously from head to toe.'
- (55) Da **voz'mite** vy ljubyx pjat' stranic iz ljubogo ego romana, i bez vsjakogo udostoverenija vy ubedites', chto imeete delo s pisatelem.<sup>31</sup> (M. Bulgakov, *Master i Margarita*)  
yes take-IMP-PERF-2PL you-2PL of.any.kind five pages from any.kind of.his novel, and  
without any proof you will.be.convinced that you.have deal with writer  
'Just take five random pages from any of his novels, and you won't need any proof to convince you that you are dealing with a writer.'

Cases where the addressee is instructed to imagine a certain situation always have a conditional or concessive character, and have the structure of a conditional sentence: protasis-apodosis.<sup>32</sup> The following semantic-syntactic features are relevant for this use:

- The imperative clause is the first clause in the co-ordinate structure.

---

<sup>31</sup> <http://lib.ru/lat/BULGAKOW/master.txt>

<sup>32</sup> In some special cases (such as in (49) above) the apodosis is left out or expressed as a separate sentence. In my opinion this sentence must be seen as a case where the speaker 'challenges' the addressee to do the imperative situation, and expresses in a subsequent sentence that realizing the situation will have negative consequences for the addressee; such sentences are conditional sentences, because the negative consequences of realizing of the imperative situation are either explicitly expressed or presupposed. Cases like these cannot strictly be seen as cases where the addressee is directed to imagine a situation, but should be better analyzed as 'ironic' cases, where the speaker ironically challenges the addressee to *perform* a situation.

- The imperative is prototypically perfective.
- The addressee may be expressed or may remain unspecified.
- The suffix *-te* is expressed in the case of the second person plural.
- The imperative situation is not necessarily controllable.
- The subject may be expressed or may remain unspecified.
- The second clause can be introduced with *i* ('and') or *a* ('but').
- In the second clause the perfective present is prototypically used.

The speaker first directs the addressee to imagine the imperative situation, and consequently expresses what the consequences of this realization are. In contrast to normal use of the directive imperative, where the addressee is to perform the imperative action, the conditional use of the directive imperative also occurs with non-controllable situations:

- (56) Duxovnaja zhizn' voobshche – ne jastreb i bystree strely, no sumej ee uderzhat', i ljubov' – ideal, neizmennaja krasota – jarkaja, svetlaja.<sup>33</sup> (O. Platonov, *Zhizn' za carja*)  
 spiritual life in general not hawk and faster than arrow, but know-IMP-PERF her  
 not.let.go, and love, ideal, invariable beauty, clear, light  
 'The spiritual life is not at all like a hawk and fast like an arrow, but if you know how to hold on to it, you will get love, ideal, never-changing beauty, clear and bright.'

The subject is often not expressed, and in such cases the imperative agent has a clear generic character. In some cases the subject is expressed, as in (55). In these cases the subject also has a generic character, since it is expressed that there is a generally valid relation of condition and consequence between the realization of the imperative action and the situation expressed in the second clause. On the basis of this general relation the speaker can direct *any* addressee to imagine the imperative situation.

The relation of condition and consequence can be made explicit with the conjunctions *a* ('but') and *i* ('and'). Note that in conditional sentences with *esli* ('if'), no coordinative conjunctions occur (*Esli pustit' babu v raj, (\*a) ona korovu za soboj vedet*). These conjunctions occur, however, in the case of other conditional sentences without conditional adverbs, for example in conditional sentences with past tense or infinitive mood + *by* (Formanovskaja, 1989: 42). The coordinative conjunctions can be expressed in the case of the conditional directive imperative because they indicate the *temporal* sequence of the realization of the imperative action and the consequences of this

---

<sup>33</sup> <http://moshkow.perm.ru/lat/PLATONOWO/rasputin.txt>

action, whereas in the case of *esli* the *conditional* (and therefore also temporal) relation is explicitly expressed. Note that it is quite natural to interpret the idea of temporal sequence of two events in terms of condition, as cause and effect are essentially observed by the regular temporal sequence of events.<sup>34</sup> In sentences without *i* or *a*, the temporal sequence of the clauses in speech time is interpreted as referring to the temporal sequences of the narrated events.

The occurrence of the directive imperative in conditional constructions is not a typical trait of Russian, but exists in many European languages. The following examples are given in Donhauser (1986):

(57) Commande deux bières et tu passeras pour un Belge. (French)

(58) Mach eine Bewegung, und ich drücke los. (German)

Constructions like these can be paraphrased with conjunctions like *si* (French) and *wenn* (German). As Donhauser (1986) remarks, the fact that adverbs that are typical of the direct speaker-hearer situation, like the German *besser* ('better'), can occur with the conditional imperative, but not in the protasis of sentences with *wenn*, can be seen as evidence for the directive character of the imperative conditionals. As I will discuss below, the directive character of the conditional directive imperative is further underlined by the specific *subjective modal* character of the conditional directive imperative, more specifically its concessive or restrictive character.

The occurrence of directive imperatives in conditional constructions in different languages is evidence that something like 'direction' can be semantically related to something like 'condition-implication'; this is remarked by the German linguist Erdmann in the following fragment:

“An einen jeden Befehl nämlich kann sich die Angabe eines Ereignisses anschliessen, das auf die Ausführung desselben folgen wird: *thue das, so wirst du leben*. Da nun die Handlung im moment des Befehls noch nicht ausgeführt ist, sondern bloss vorgestellt wird, so lag es nahe, den Imperativ auch dann zu brauchen, wenn eine wirkliche Ausführung desselben, überhaupt nicht gewünscht, vielmehr bloss die Vorstellung desselben erweckt und mit dem Fall der Verwirklichung eintretenden Folgen kombiniert werden soll.” (cited in Donhauser, 1986: 172)

---

<sup>34</sup> Note, however, that in some cases, at least in Dutch, the directive conditional is also used with coordinations where no temporal sequence is intended: *Los die som op, en je bent slim* (solve-IMP that equation, and you are smart; 'If you solve that equation, you must be smart.'). The basic idea of temporal sequence leads to the presupposition of a (non-mentioned) 'situation', viz. the idea of 'concluding'.

Proeme, in his analysis of the Dutch (directive) imperative gives the following description of such imperative cases, which can also be applied to the Russian imperative:

“In what I will call the ‘interpretation of imagination’, the speaker uses the [imperative] form to direct the addressee to imagine that he (the addressee) fulfills in the situation in question the role that would be performed by the referent of the subject if the situation were described by another sentence type. The goal of the speaker is to direct the addressee to take stock of the consequences of the presented situation. Such consequences can be mentioned by the speaker in a main clause that immediately follows the imperative sentence.” (Proeme, 1991: 36)<sup>35</sup>

According to Proeme there is something like a general or invariant meaning of the Dutch directive imperative. The interaction of this general meaning and a particular linguistic or pragmatic context results in a particular interpretation. This interpretation can be such that the addressee is directed to perform the act as specified in the proposition or such that the addressee is directed to imagine himself as the actor (and the consequences of the act). The (general) meaning given by Proeme is stated here:

“The speaker directs the addressee to consider himself to be performing the role in the imperative action which otherwise (in another sentence type) would be performed by the referent of the subject.”(Proeme, 1991: 39)<sup>36</sup>

It is also possible to state that the performance interpretation must be identified as the central meaning of the imperative, and that the imagination interpretation must be seen as a more peripheral use of the directive imperative. One then has to conclude that the directive imperative shows something like prototypical effects; some imperative uses are better satisfied by the given definition than others. An argument in favor of this conclusion is that the imagination interpretation only occurs in a conditional context,

---

<sup>35</sup> “In wat ik de ‘voorstellingsinterpretatie’ zal noemen gebruikt de spreker de vorm om de toegesprokene ertoe te bewegen zich voor te stellen dat hij (de toegesprokene) in het genoemde gebeuren of de genoemde situatie de rol vervult die zou worden vervuld door de referent van het subject als het genoemde werd beschreven door middel van een ander zinstype; de spreker heeft daarbij de bedoeling de toegesprokene de gevolgen van de voorgestelde situatie of het voorgestelde gebeuren in ogeschouw te laten nemen. Zulke gevolgen kan de spreker zelf noemen in een direct op de imperativuszin volgende hoofdzin (...).”

<sup>36</sup> “[D]e spreker zet de toegesprokene(n) ertoe aan zichzelf te beschouwen als in het genoemde de rol vervullend die anders (bij een ander zinstype) zou worden vervuld door de referent van het subject.”

often with a generic agent.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, the imperative action is always a future action, which means that sentences like the following are not possible:

- (59) ?Win de wedstrijd, wat had je met het geld gedaan?  
*meaning:* 'Suppose that you had won the game, what would you have done with the money?'

This cannot be explained on the basis of the (general) meaning of the imperative given by Proeme. What is missing in Proeme's definition of the imperative is the idea that the addressee should take account of the consequences of his *performance*.

It is important to get an answer to the question why the interaction of the general meaning of the imperative and the particular linguistic or pragmatic context may, without a special context, lead to a performance-interpretation, but may only lead to an imagination interpretation if the context has a conditional character. In my opinion this problem can be 'solved' if we accept that the central meaning of the imperative relates to the fact that the addressee is to perform the imperative situation, and that in a generic conditional context this meaning may be interpreted *as if* the subject is directed to perform the act conveyed by the imperative. This *as if* interpretation occurs in a conditional context only, because here it is clear that the speaker only wants to emphasize the consequences of the performance of the imperative action by a subject and is not actually challenging the addressee to perform the action.

Proposing this '*as if* interpretation' is the same as saying that the subject is instructed to imagine himself to be the actor of the situation conveyed by the imperative predicate and its environment. My analysis differs from that of Proeme because he considers the performance interpretation and the imagination interpretation to have the same status, whereas I think that the performance interpretation must be seen as the central use of the directive imperative, and the imagination interpretation as a modification of the performance interpretation. In the case of the imagination interpretation the speaker is not actually challenging the hearer to perform the imperative situation, but rather is

---

<sup>37</sup> In Dutch the conditional context can be pragmatic like in *Verlies in de Sovjetunie maar eens je paspoort!* (*Dan ben je nog niet jarig*) (Lose-IMP in the Soviet Union PRT your passport! (Then you will be in trouble). According to Proeme the expression *maar eens* is not obligatory to maintain the given interpretation. I do not fully agree with that. In my opinion, *Verlies in de Sovjetunie je paspoort!* is initially interpreted as an instruction to perform the imperative. In my opinion, the word *maar* (with facultatively *eens*) is natural to maintain the imagination interpretation here.

challenging any hearer (the generic hearer) to imagine that he himself is the performer of the imperative situation to describe the consequences of this act (Figure 3.8).

Figure 3.8

*BASIC meaning:*

**The speaker directs the hearer at  $t_0$  to perform the imperative situation:  
→ SIT(V)**

+ *context:*

- The imperative is the first in a sequence of clauses.
- The relation expressed in the sequence of clauses must be pragmatically interpretable as indicating cause – effect, rather than as something that the addressee must actually perform at the moment of speaking. If the situation is controllable, the subject of the action cannot (only) be equated with the hearer present in the speech situation, but rather with the ‘generic’ agent, that is, anyone in the given context (and if the action is uncontrollable, common sense has it that the addressee cannot follow the impulse to perform the action).

*Interpretation:*

The speaker directs the hearer to imagine himself to be the performer of the imperative situation: (→ SIT(V)), to make him realize the consequences of this performance (or in other words: the speaker directs the hearer *hypothetically* to perform the imperative action.)

*Selected:* idea of imagination of the imperative action

*Backgrounded:* idea of actual performance of the imperative action

The imperative is always connected to the idea of realizing an action and the idea of imagining the consequences for the addressee, which means that the feature of ‘imagining’ is a necessary part of the directive imperative meaning. In the case of the basic imperative use, the idea of realization is connected to the actual performance of the action, which is lost in the case of the conditional use.

The directive character of the conditional imperative under discussion accounts for the so-called ‘subjective modal’ character of this use. This means that in these sentences the speaker expresses his attitude toward the imperative proposition. The subjective modal character is absent in the case of oppositional forms. The subjective modal character can be made visible if we paraphrase such sentences with other forms and find

presuppositional focus-sensitive particles like *even* and *only, just*: ‘*Even* if you let this woman into paradise she will take a cow with her’; ‘*Just* ask him how to go to the factory, and he will look at you contemptuously from head to toe’. In these two sentences we find the following pragmatic context for the imperative. The speaker wishes to make the point that *q* (she is a woman who always takes her cow with her; he does not like it if people ask how to get to the factory), under the assumption that the addressee does not expect *q* to be the case.

In the case of the conditional directive imperative, the hearer is not expected to already imagine himself to be the performer of the imperative action because it is not expected that the realization of X leads to Y. This can be motivated as follows. It only makes sense to give an *impulse* to the addressee to imagine himself to be the performer of the action, in those cases where it can be expected that without that impulse the addressee will not imagine himself to be the performer of the action. The breaking of the expected course of events can be interpreted differently, depending on the context in which the imperative occurs. In some cases the expectation might be that the realization of X is not enough to lead to Y; in such cases it is stated that *just* the realization of X is enough to lead to Y. In other cases the expectation is that of all the actions that can be realized, the realization of X is the least likely to lead to Y; in such cases it is stated that *even* the realization of X will lead to Y. These latter cases have a concessive character.

Note that the feature of ‘imagination’ is not expressed by the infinitive. This accounts for the difference in use between the imperative conditional directive and the conditional infinitive. A conditional directive imperative sentence like (48) cannot be paraphrased with an infinitive:

- (60)      ?Pustit’ babu v raj, a ona korovu za soboj vedet.  
let-INF this woman into paradise, and she will take her cow with her

The infinitive can only be used to express condition if the speaker expresses that there is a general relation of condition-result between the infinitive situation and another situation, or if the speaker actually wants the realization of the infinitive situation, for example:

- (61)      Sidet’ v kabinax – znachit szhech’ ostatok gorjuchego, kotorogo i tak edva-edva xvatilo by teper’ do sovxoza. A ne **otaplivat’** kabiny – zaprosto možno zamerznut’. (Proeme, forthcoming/ A. Ajmatov, *Belyj paraxod, Povesti*)  
sit-INF-IMPERF in cabins, means burn rest of.fuel, that and so hardly was.sufficient  
IRR now till sovhoz. but not heat-INF-IMPERF cabin, just can freeze

'Sitting in the cabin means burning the rest of the fuel that would just about be sufficient for the sovhoz. But not heating the cabin means that we will just freeze to death.'

- (62) A ej **skazat'**, ona primet blizko k serdcu (...). (ibid./ L. Petrushevskaja, *P'esy*)  
but her say-INF-PERF, she will.take close to heart (...)  
'If you tell her, it will trouble her deeply.'
- (63) Po smutnom sne bezdelica trevozhit. **Skazat'** vam son: pojmete vy togda. (Maurice, 1996: 164/ Griboedov)  
through disturbing dream trifle disturbs. say-INF-PERF you-DAT dream: will.understand you then  
'Disturbing dreams can make you worry about trifles. Shall I tell you the dream, than you will understand/ Telling you the dream will make you understand.'

In these sentences the idea of 'just *imagine* Y to be the case', and consequently the unexpected relation between the apodosis and protasis, is absent. The infinitive does not express the idea of a force directed at the hypothetical performance of some situation (→ SIT(V)), but expresses the idea of an appropriate situation type, which makes it unsuitable for use in contexts in (60). In order to interpret the infinitive as a conditional, a special context is necessary. This is a so-called predicative context where it is expressed that the infinitive situation *is the case*, or *applies* to some specified or non-specified agent. This infinitive in a predicative context may have a general character, or a specific character.<sup>38</sup> In the case of the general character, the non-expressed infinitive agent remains unspecified, such that it is interpreted as the generic agent. In these cases it is expressed that the realization of X always or necessarily leads to Y (or put differently, situation type X always involves situation Y); such a case is exemplified by (61), where the speaker expresses what one can expect if the infinitive situation is realized. In other cases the infinitive can be associated with a specific agent. This is the case for example in (63) where the speaker is associated with the infinitive agent. This sentence can be interpreted as a question where the speaker asks the addressee whether he agrees with the realization of the infinitive

---

<sup>38</sup> Note that the infinitive can be used without conditional conjunction (*esli*) in counterfactual conditional sentences with an optative character, as in the following construction [[infinitive + *by* + (dative)] [subjunctive]]: *Prijti by tebe ran'she, i my obo vsem by dogovorilas'* (Formanovskaja, 1989: 42); come-INF-PERF particle you-DAT earlier, and you about everything particle reach agreement; 'If only you had come earlier, we could have reached an agreement about everything'. I think these infinitives can be used in a conditional context because of the hypothetical interpretation that results from the particle *by*.

situation; this case can be seen as a special instance of the modal infinitive sentences discussed in 4.15.

### 3.2.4.2 Use of reinforcement

Another peripheral use of the directive imperative is the use what I will call 'reinforcement' use. These are cases like the following (repeated for convenience):

- (64) **Muchajsja!** Ne nado delat' takie gluposti! (Barentsen, *forthcoming*)  
suffer-IMP-IMPERF! not necessary do-INF such stupid.things  
'Yes suffer! You shouldn't have been so stupid.'

In sentences like these the addressee is *performing* the imperative action at the moment of utterance without the expectation that he will stop performing the action. In most cases the addressee does not desire the action, although this seems not to be a necessary feature. The speaker agrees with the realization of the action by the addressee, and often takes a kind of malicious pleasure in the performance of the action. The situation can be uncontrollable. Cases like these can possibly be analyzed as in Figure 3.9.

Figure 3.9

---

*BASIC meaning:*

**The speaker directs the hearer at  $t_0$  to perform the imperative situation:  
→ SIT(V)**

+ *context:*

- The addressee is *performing* V at  $t_0$
- The situation can be uncontrollable
- The action can be seen as negative for the addressee

*Interpretation:*

By giving an impulse to the realization of the imperative action, the speaker *reinforces* the imperative action, and as such expresses that he agrees with the realization, and especially the continuation of the imperative action by the addressee.

*Selected:* speaker commitment

*Backgrounded:* idea of an action that breaks the expected course of events

---

By reinforcing the imperative situation the speaker expresses that he agrees with the realization of the imperative situation by the addressee.<sup>39</sup> It may be that the idea of reinforcement mostly arises in cases where the situation is not performed volitionally by the addressee (like *muchat'sja*) and where the idea is attributed to the addressee that he would like to stop performing the situation. As such, the idea of 'breaking the expected course of events' occurs in a weakened form. These cases are similar to the 'continue V' cases discussed earlier. Facts such as these point at the *fuzzy borders* between the different usage types or interpretations. These fluid extensions between the different uses point at the fact that we cannot treat them as separate representations, but rather must see them as *interpretations* or *adjustments*.

### 3.2.4.3 'Non-future' use

A third peripheral case that I will briefly discuss is that of sentences where by using the imperative the speaker expresses that a particular action is prohibited, although the action in question has already been realized and the negative consequences of this action are present. These are sentences like (51) above, and the following sentence:

- (65) Isaju Gorbovu ja bashku otorvu, uvidish'! – Za chto? – sprosil xoxol. – Ne shpion', ne donosi! (Barentsen, *forthcoming!* Gor'kij)  
 Isaja Gorbova I mug tear.off, you.see!- for what?, asked Ukrainian. not spy-IMP-IMPERF, not squeal-IMP-PERF  
 "I'll tear off Isaja Gorbov's head, you know!" "What for...?" asked the Ukrainian. "He shouldn't spy and squeal."

Cases like these are different from prototypical imperative cases in that the idea of performing a *future* action is not expressed. Furthermore, in sentences like these the direction is not per se aimed at the addressee present in the speech situation. I propose to analyze sentences like these as in Figure 3.10.

---

<sup>39</sup> Note that one cannot say that the speaker gives an impulse to the further realization of the action because this would imply that the action would have to be controllable.

Figure 3.10

---

*BASIC meaning:*

**The speaker directs the hearer to perform the imperative situation: → SIT(V)**

+ *context:*

- The imperative occurs with negation (*ne V*)<sup>40</sup>
- Some agent x is introduced that has performed action V
- The consequences of realizing V are present or imminent and are evaluated negatively by the speaker

*Interpretation:*

The speaker expresses: if the generic agent wants the consequences of V not to happen, realize *ne V*, where agent x is substituted for the generic agent, or put differently, where the generic agent is interpreted as agent x. Because agent x has already realized V, this implies that the speaker expresses that the agent *should not have realized V*.

*Selected:* idea of impulse to perform an action

*Backgrounded:* idea of immediate realization in the speech situation

---

The possibility of using of the imperative in contexts where the agent is not the addressee present in the speech situation, but rather the generic agent, can be seen as an important factor for the transfer of the directive imperative to the necessitive imperative, which will be discussed in the next subsection.

#### 3.2.4.4 Uses with a generic agent: Borderline cases between directive use and necessitive use

The imperative can be used in Russian with uses where the agent can be identified with a *generic agent*. Such uses can be seen as borderline cases between the necessitive use, which I will discuss in the next section, and the directive use. Consider the following sentences:

---

<sup>40</sup> This is possibly not necessary. I have not, however, seen sentences with the structure: x did not do V, the consequences of not doing V are negative, and to avoid these negative consequences the agent should have done V.

- (66) Tam est' xoroshij pljazh: **lezhi, zagoraj, kupajsja** (Kovtunova & Shvedova, 1986)  
 there is good beach: lie-IMP-IMPERF, tan.IMP-IMPERF, bathe-IMP-IMPER  
 'There is good beach there: one can just lie down there, take the sun and swim.'
- (67) Rybackij zakon: raz starshina govorit – vpolnjaj. Idet voda – znachit, èx, ne zhalej sil, **rabotaj, sozdavaj** damby. (Vasil'eva, 1969: 40)  
 fisherman's law: when oldest speaks – realize-IMP-IMPERF, goes water – means, hey, not waste-IMP-IMPERF force, work-IMP-IMPERF, make-IMP-IMPERF dams  
 'The law of the fishermen: when the oldest speaks, one should do what he says. If the water flows, it means come on, don't waste your power, work, make dams.'

The first sentence has a permissive character; which means that the addressee can be seen as the causal impulse (see 3.2.2.3); the second sentence has the character of an order. In contrast to prototypical directive (permissive) uses, the imperative does not occur in a *direct* speaker-addressee context; the addressee is not specific but potential or generic, and the speaker states that in the given situation the imperative action applies. This means that the speaker is not the impulse giver, but he *identifies* with the impulse giver and states that in the given situation the generic agent is to realize the imperative action. The meaning of this construction can roughly be paraphrased in English with: If you are in situation X, do Y.

The abstraction from the direct speaker-addressee context is, at least to *some* extent, a matter of degree. In the sentences given above one can still speak of directive uses, because the speaker can identify with the impulse giver and give the impulse from this perspective, and the addressee can identify with the agent of the imperative situation; in other sentences the directive character is weakened further, for example:

- (68) Zhizn' v shalashе byla ochen' prijatna Vasil'ju. **Lezhi** celyj den' na svezhej paxuchej solomne, **pojljadyvaj**, ne zabralis' li gde rebjata za jablokami, **posvistivaj i raspevaj** pesni. (L. Tolstoj)  
 life in hut was very pleasant for Vasily. lay-IMP-IMPERF whole day on fresh smelling straw, look.after-IMP-IMPERF, not come PRT where children after apples, whistle-IMP-IMPERF and sing-IMP-IMPERF songs  
 'Life in the hut was very pleasant for Vasily. He only had to lie all day on the fresh, fragrant straw, look to make sure the boys did not steal any apples, and whistle and sing songs.'

- (69) – I za porjadkom v kavartire **sledi**, i subbotniki **provodi** i s objazatel'stvami po dvoram **xodi**, – dumaete, legko odnoj-to? (Shvedova, 1974: 113)  
and after order in house keep-IMP-IMPERF, and voluntary.work do-IMP-IMPERF and with obligations in courtyards go-IMP-IMPERF, you think, easy for.a.woman.alone-PRT  
I have to keep the apartment tidy, and I have to voluntary work and I have to fulfill my obligations in various places, do you think, that is easy for a woman all alone?

Such sentences express necessity, in (68) with a nuance of permission, and in (69) with a nuance of order. In these sentences the feature of direction is weakened even more because the identification of the speaker with the impulse giver is weaker; this is especially clear in (69) because in this sentence the speaker disagrees with the performance of the imperative situations. Furthermore, in these sentences the non-expressed agent of the imperative situation is associated with a specific agent, viz. the third person subject Vasily in (68), and the speaker in (69). As such, these sentences do not have a typical generic character. Such sentences are therefore usually not classified as *directive* cases, but as *necessitive* cases (e.g. Shvedova, 1974).

One speaks of directive use when the speaker gives an impulse to the second person addressee to perform an action, whereas one speaks of necessitive use if there is an impulse directed at the realization of the situation, and the speaker cannot be seen as the giver of the impulse and the second person addressee cannot be seen as the agent of the imperative situation (as in (2) above). Clear directive cases occur in the immediate speaker-addressee context, whereas clear necessitive cases occur if the subject of the imperative is a third or a first person subject. I do not think, however, that it is possible to draw clear boundaries between directive use and necessitive use. Generic cases constitute intermediate cases between directive cases and necessitive cases; in these sentences the addressee is not the agent of the imperative action, but it is expressed that anyone in the given situation, including the addressee, is directed to perform the imperative action.

In some sentences there is a close association between the intended agent of the imperative situation and the speaker. The close semantic relation between such cases and second person cases can be demonstrated with the following sentence, where the imperative occurs with a second person subject (*ty*):

- (70) Deвица platok uronila – ty **podnimaj**, ona vxodit – ty **vstavaj** i **davaj** ej svoj stul, uxodit – ty **provozhaj**... (Vinogradov, 1947: 600/ Chexov)  
girl handkerchief dropped – you-NOM take.up-IMP-IMPERF, she enters – you-NOM stand.up-IMP-IMPERF and give her your chair, goes.out, you-NOM accompany-IMP-IMPERF

'If a girl drops her handkerchief, you are to pick it up, if she enters, you have to get up, and offer her your chair, if she goes out, you have to accompany her.'

In this sentence the second person subject does not refer to the addressee, but is generic and implicitly refers to the speaker. The speaker takes the perspective of a force (general law, norm, or habit) which gives an impulse to anyone in the given context, including the speaker and the addressee, to realize the imperative situation.

In this subsection I will briefly discuss one specific generic imperative construction, viz. the use of the imperative with the particle *xot*' to indicate that the imperative situation is a far-fetched but only adequate or possible reaction to a certain situation. The following sentences are examples of this construction:

- (71) Pocherk u menja velikolepnejšij, *xot*' v pisateli ili v ministry **idi**. (Barentsen, *pc*/ Chexov)  
handwriting at me magnificent, almost in writers or in ministers go-IMP  
'My handwriting is just magnificent, I might as well become a writer or minister.'
- (72) [V]oobščhe zhe v S. čitali očen' malo, i v zdeshnej biblioteke tak i govorili, čto esli by ne devuški i ne molodye evrei, čto *xot*' **zakryvaj** biblioteku. (Veyrenc, 1980: 124 / Chexov)  
generally PRT in S. they.read very little, and in local library such and they.said, that if PRT not girls and not young jews, that almost close-IMP-IMPERF library  
'In general they read very little in S., and in the library here they used to say that had it not been for the girls and young Jews, one might as well close the library.'
- (73) I tut navalivaetsja takaja rasslabuxa, čto *xot*' **lozhis'** i **pomiraj**. (V. Kunin, *Kysja*)  
and here attacks such weakness, that almost lie.down-IMP-IMPERF and die-IMP-IMPERF  
'And I was overwhelmed by such a weakness, that one could almost lie down and die.'

The following semantic-syntactic features are relevant for this construction:

- The imperative prototypically occurs in a sequence of sentences, either as the second sentence in a coordinate structure (with an intonational pause), or as an embedded sentence (with *čto*).<sup>41</sup>

<sup>41</sup> In some cases the sentences do not occur in a coordinate structure, e.g. *A vot, podite žb, vtorično zamuzb vyjti bukvat'no ne v sostojanii. Prjamo xot' v gazete pechataj* ('But she is literally not able to marry for a second time. One might as well put an add in the newspaper.')

- The particle *˘ot*’ is placed before the imperative (it modifies the imperative).
- No subject is expressed; the subject is interpreted as the generic subject.
- The imperative is prototypically imperfective, indicating that the subject could almost *engage* in the imperative situation.

Many instances of this construction have a strong phraseological or idiomatic character (cf. Lubensky, 1995). Xrakovskij & Volodin (1986) give the following description of this use:

“From the point of view of content there is a comparison of two situations: a real situation that is judged by the speaker to have reached its natural end point of realization, and a potential situation (expressed by the construction with the particle *˘ot*’ and the imperative), that objectively follows from the real situation, since it is determined by it. In this respect it is not important whether the potential situation could in fact actually be realized by the will of the speaker (or another person), or whether this is not the case.” (Xrakovskij & Volodin, 1986: 241)

They further remark that the construction can be paraphrased in Russian with *moz˘bno* (‘may’) + infinitive (1986: 241).

I think it is best to relate this use of the imperative to the basic directive imperative use. The sentences under discussion convey that the scene expressed by the first clause is *almost* a reason to give an impulse to the realization of the imperative situation. This is a *hyperbolic* statement, since it is clear that in reality the actual realization of the imperative situation does not apply. The imperative use under discussion can be seen as a case of possibility or permission because it is expressed that situation X removes a potential barrier to the realization of Y (see Talmy, 1985, for an analysis of possibility in terms of the dynamics of forces). Since the relation of condition is assumed to be generally valid, the speaker acts as if he almost directs the *generic* agent (any agent in the given situation) to realize the imperative action. The construction can therefore not be seen as a directive use in the strict sense; this is underlined by the possibility of the construction occurring in subordinate clauses, as in ((72), (73)). On the other hand, the construction cannot occur with first or third persons; this underlines the relation between this imperative use and the basic directive use.

### 3.2.5 Conclusion

In this section I have given a description of the directive imperative. The directive imperative can be described as follows: The speaker directs the hearer to perform the

imperative situation. This presupposes (i) that the addressee is not intending to realize the imperative action, or that the addressee is expected to stop realizing the imperative action, (ii) that the action is controllable by the addressee, and (iii) that the speaker by uttering the imperative intends to contribute to the realization of the imperative action by the addressee. The directive imperative differs from oppositional forms in that the idea of directivity leading to the realization of the action must be seen as a *meaning*, and not as an *interpretation*. Besides the *basic* use, *derived* uses of the directive imperative occur, for example the conditional use, the reinforcement use, and the non-future use. One can speak of a derived use because under the influence of a particular context, some aspects of the basic imperative meaning are selected, whereas others are cancelled. This process of interpretation is not random, but is based on general principles of rationality, that is, the (conventionalized) interpretations are reasonable given the context, and the aim of the language user to choose for optimal interpretation.

In the next section I will give a description of an extended use of the directive imperative, viz. the *necessitive* imperative. This use differs from the directive imperative uses discussed in this section, because the features ‘impulse to the *addressee*’ is backgrounded.

### 3.3 Necessitive use of the imperative

#### 3.3.1 Introduction

In the previous section I gave an analysis of the directive imperative. I showed that it is typical of the directive situation that there is an addressee who is directed by the speaker to perform the imperative action. This description applies to the basic directive use; peripheral uses can be seen as extensions of this use by selection and backgrounding of features under perspectives. In this section I will give an analysis of the so-called *necessitive* use of the imperative. I will argue that the necessitive imperative can be seen as an extension of the directive imperative by selection and backgrounding of features under perspectives. The necessitive can be seen as a separate imperative use because the central feature of the directive imperative – direction from the speaker to the addressee – is backgrounded. This means that the imperative is used in non-directive contexts (with first, third person subjects, inanimate subjects, and impersonal verbs).

The section has the following structure. In 3.3.2 I will give a definition of the meaning of the necessitive imperative. In 3.3.3 I will discuss the semantic-syntactic features of the necessitive imperative. In 3.3.4, I will further analyze the relation between the necessitive

imperative and the directive imperative, and discuss difference in meaning between the necessitive imperative and its oppositional forms.

### 3.3.2 The meaning of the necessitive imperative

The following sentences are examples of the so-called necessitive use of the imperative:

- (74) Vzjalsja učit', tak on i uchi. (Shvedova, 1974: 117)  
started study, so he-NOM and study-IMP-IMPERF  
'He has begun his studies, so he should continue them.'
- (75) Ljudi bedokurjat, a ovcy – otvečaj. (Shvedova, 1974: 115/ Spasskij)  
people cause.trouble-IMP-IMPERF, but sheep-NOM – be.responsible-IMP-IMPERF  
'The people cause trouble, but the sheep are held responsible.'
- (76) Vse ushli, a ja sidi doma i rabotaj. (Shvedova, 1974: 107)  
all gone, but I-NOM sit-IMP-IMPERF at.home and work-IMP-IMPERF  
'Everybody has gone out, but I have to stay at home and work.'
- (77) Im udovol'stvie, a my muchajsja...(Uppsala corpus)  
they-DAT pleasure, but we-NOM suffer-IMP-IMPERF  
'They have pleasure, but we have to suffer...'
- (78) V dome vseгда **bud'** teplo, a sam ne xoches' dazhe drov prinesti. (Veyrenc, 1980: 99/ *Russkaja Grammatika*, 1980, II: 590)  
in house always be-IMP warm-ADV, but self not you.want even wood bring  
'You always want it to be warm in the house, but you don't even want to go for some wood yourself.'

In these sentences the imperative is used to express that the imperative action is obligated, or conceived as necessitive. Necessitive imperative use can be paraphrased in Russian with modal forms such as *dolzhen*, *nado*, *prixoditsja* and the dative-infinitive construction. The necessitive imperative prototypically occurs in contrastive constructions where the necessity for the subject to *perform* the imperative action is compared with another situation. I will use the term 'necessitive use' for this use of the imperative, as a translation of the Russian term *dolzhenstvovatel'noe naklonenie/znachenie* (cf. Shvedova, 1974). In contrast to the directive use of the imperative, the *speaker* does not direct the *addressee* to *perform* an action, but expresses that there is some force (other than himself, although he may

identify with the force) that directs the agent of the action (expressed in the nominative) to realize the imperative action. The force may be a person, a social norm, or the circumstances in general. Because the imperative does not occur in the directive context, the subject of the imperative is not restricted to second person subjects, but occurs foremost with third and first persons, and in impersonal constructions. Following Shvedova (1974), two main types of necessitive uses can be distinguished:

- (a) Sentences where the necessity appears as an obligation, and where, dependent upon the character of the obligating force, the speaker may express his negative attitude to the action imposed on the subject, especially if he/ she is to be identified with the subject (e.g. (75)–(78)).
- (b) Sentences where the necessity is the result of something like custom or habit, and where the speaker accepts the imperative situation (e.g. (74)).

As I will argue below, type (a) shares features with directive imperative use, while some uses of type (b) share features with optative imperative use.<sup>42</sup> The second necessitive type is less frequent than the first type, and Shvedova (1974: 116) cites Shmelev, who argues that this use is not productive in modern Russian; she disagrees with this statement, claiming that this use still occurs in modern Russian. The data at my disposal, however, confirm that uses of type (b) are much less frequent than uses of type (a); most instances of the necessitive imperative use occur either with non-expressed generic subjects (such cases can also be seen as directive cases), or with third/ first persons in contrastive constructions (e.g. (75)–(78)). I suspect that the rather infrequent occurrence of type (b) is connected with the fact that such cases can also be expressed with the oppositional form *past'*, and that the decline of this necessitive use is directly related to the decline of the optative imperative use as described in 3.5. I will motivate the tendency of restriction of the necessitive use to contrastive contexts with first/ third persons by pointing at the meaning of the construction.

The following description can be given for the necessitive imperative use:

**There is some non-speaker force aimed at the realization of the imperative situation (expressed by the subject in the nominative if the verb is personal).**

Figure 3.11 shows the frame that can be given for the (basic) necessitive imperative.

---

<sup>42</sup> In fact, some instances that Shvedova (1974) calls necessitive are classified as optative cases by Vinogradov & Shvedova (1964).

Figure 3.11

| Force       | Directed at                                | Subject of situation          | Object of force |
|-------------|--|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| Non-speaker | → SIT(V <sub>+aspect</sub> )t <sub>1</sub> | S= 1/ (2)/ 3sg-pl/ impersonal | S               |

The meaning of the necessitive imperative given above presupposes that:

- (i) The imperative situation breaks the expected course of events
- (ii) By using the imperative the addressee is invited to imagine the realization of the imperative situation

Note that two of the presuppositions of the directive imperative are absent in the case of the necessitive, viz. (a) controllability, and (b) speaker commitment (cf. 3.2.2.0). The presupposition of speaker commitment is absent because the speaker is not the impulse giver. The presupposition that the situation is controllable is also absent, and this is underlined by the occurrence of impersonal cases, and cases like (77). In the case of the directive imperative the feature of control could be attributed to the manipulative character of the directive (expressing the imperative is intending to change someone's behavior). In the case of the necessitive this manipulative character is absent. By using the necessitive imperative the speaker expresses that he imagines some force directed at the realization of the imperative situation. Since this force may also be an abstract force (the circumstances), such cases do not necessarily have a clear controllable character. Note furthermore, that in most cases an agent expressed in the nominative can be seen as a participant that must contribute to the realization of the imperative action. Put differently, the non-agent force is directed at the subject of the imperative action. This is less clear, however, with the verb *byt'* ('be'), where no subject is expressed, or where the subject is non-animate (as in (89) below). In such sentences the force is aimed at some other contextually given participant, or some non-specified participant, that must contribute to the realization of the imperative action.

The two other presuppositions of the directive imperative, viz. (i) the imperative situation breaks the expected course of events, and (ii) by using the imperative the addressee is directed to *imagine* the imperative situation, are (partly) preserved in the case of the necessitive imperative. If we look carefully at the use of the necessitive imperative, we can see three important features that set this use apart from oppositional forms, such as *dolzhen* and *nado*, viz.:

- (i) Necessitive imperative sentences always express so-called ‘subjective modal’ nuances.
- (ii) The necessitive imperative prototypically occurs in contrastive contexts.
- (iii) In the case of the necessitive imperative we do not find tense.

Below I will argue that these specific features can only be motivated if we relate the meaning of the necessitive to the meaning of the directive imperative. Both in the case of the necessitive use of the imperative and in the case of the directive use of the imperative, an essential part is played by the idea of direction aimed at the realization of the action (→ SIT (V)), and consequently the idea of contrast between SIT(V) and SIT(not V).

Before discussing the specific meaning of the necessitive and the relations between the necessitive and the directive, I will first briefly consider some semantic-syntactic features of relevance for the necessitive imperative. I will then examine the relations between the necessitive imperative and other imperative uses, especially the directive imperative.

### 3.3.3 Semantic-syntactic features

- (i) + imperfective aspect, perfective in some cases
- (ii) – tense
- (iii) + all subjects in nominative / dative/ impersonal constructions
- (iv) no plural morpheme *-te* or directive suffix *-ka*
- (v) occurrence of embedded necessitives
- (vi) no fixed word order

I will briefly discuss these features below.

#### 3.3.3.1 Aspect

The necessitive imperative occurs with both aspects, but in most cases we find the imperfective aspect. This can be motivated by the fact that in most necessitive cases the imperative indicates a *state* that the subject is in. Two examples are given below of sentences with a perfective aspect:

- (79) Filat i na bazar sbegaj, i svari, i podaj, i vychisti, i vymoj, i ubajukaj Vasen’ku, i nakormi ego kashkoj, i ponjanchi ego, i vezde Filat, i na vse emu vremja. (Vinogradov & Shvedova, 1964: 227/ Vel’tm.)

Filat and on market run-IMP-PERF, and scald-IMP-PERF, and give-IMP-PERF, and clean-IMP-PERF, and wash-IMP-PERF, and lull-IMP-PERF Vasen'ka, and feed-IMP-PERF him with porridge, and nurse.for.a.while, and everywhere Filat, and on all him time 'Filat has to run to the market, and cook, and serve, and clean, and wash, and lull little Vasja, and feed him porridge, and nurse him for a while, and Filat is everywhere, and has time for all these things.'

- (80) On ne ponimaet, chto ona iz tex zhenshchin, kotorye ne mogut shutit' svoimi chuvstvami. Odno iz nix: ili **uvezi** on ee, ènergicheski **postupi**, ili **daj** razvod. A èto dushit ee. (*Russkaja Grammatika*, 1980, II: 118/L. Tolstoj)  
he not understand, that she from those women, that not can make.fun.of.their.own feelings. one of these: or take.away-IMP-PERF he-NOM her, energetically act-IMP-PERF, or give-IMP-PERF leave. but this kills her  
'He doesn't understand that she is one of those women that cannot make fun of their own feelings. One of the two: either he should take her away, and act energetically, or he should let her go. But this is killing her.'

The first sentence could be seen as a case of '*nagljadno-primernoe znachenie*' ('good example meaning'), that is, the action is presented as if it were a single fact to illustrate that the action is typical of the subject in question. Besides the '*nagljadno-primernoe znachenie*', which typically favours the perfective aspect, the perfective may also be chosen to indicate that the obligated actions occur in a narrative chain of events; for such cases the perfective aspect is typical (see Barentsen, 1985).

In the second sentence the speaker focuses on the positive result of the *hypothetical* performance of the imperative action, put differently, the speaker expresses that the subject should realize one of the alternative imperative actions. This sentence is very close to an optative imperative. Although the perfective aspect is typical of sentences where the speaker agrees with the realization of the imperative situation, we do not find the perfective aspect in all such. Consider for example the following sentence, where we find two perfectives and an imperfective:

- (81) **Kogda** kto v polon popadet – drugoj **prodaj** vse i **daj** vykup, a ne to sam **stupaj** v polon (...). (Gogol': 173)  
when who in prison ends.up, other sell-IMP-PERF everything and bail.out-IMP-PERF, or else self step-IMP-IMPERF in prison (...)  
'When one of them is captured, the other must sell everything and bail the other out, or else go to prison himself.'

In this sentence the speaker agrees with the realization of the imperative action, but nevertheless an imperfective is chosen in the case of the third imperative (*stupaj*). This may be motivated by the fact that *ne to* ('or else') implies a negative alternative; this use of the imperative in this sentence may be seen as a case of *pristup k dejstvuju* ('start to do an action'). From this sentence it can be concluded that speaker agreement is not a sufficient condition for the perfective aspect.

In the case of negation we find the perfective aspect:

- (82) On vse dni gde-to propodaet, a ja iz domu ne vyjdi. (Xrakovskij & Volodin, 1987: 238)  
 he all days somewhere vanishes, but I from house not go.out-IMP-PERF  
 'Every day he goes to somewhere else, but I cannot even leave the house.'
- (83) V perednem vagone skuchno i xmurno i na nogu nikomu ne nastupi. (A. Zoshchenko, 1935: 5)  
 in first railway carriage dull and depressing and on foot nobody-DAT not step-IMP-PERF  
 'In the first railway carriage it is dull and depressing, and you may not step on anyone's foot.'

Such cases express prohibition ('may not'). In the case of negation there is some understood intention of the agent to fulfill the action, but the intended action is blocked or interdicted by the obligating force. The perfective aspect is triggered by the fact that the subject intends to realize the situation, but is blocked in this realization, and may not even realize the situation on a single occasion.

### 3.3.3.2 Tense

The necessitive does not express tense. I discussed the absence of tense in the case of the necessitive imperative in 3.1. I argued that the absence of tense in the case of the necessitive imperative is connected with the fact that the speaker partially identifies with the force that is directed at the realization of the imperative situation, leading to a so-called *dynamic construal* of the realization or *dynamic realization*. Because of the dynamic construal the speaker invites the addressee to imagine the realization of the imperative situation at the moment of uttering. The feature of dynamic realization is not compatible with the idea of placing the action before, during, or after the moment of speaking. As such, the necessitive is not marked for tense. Note that absence of tense does not mean that the necessitive only refers to present actions; the necessitive imperative may refer to past

situations. This is the case for example in (68) above. The past character is not part of the meaning of the form but must be seen as an *interpretation*.

### 3.3.3.3 Subject

In contrast to the directive imperative, which only occurs in the speaker-addressee context where the hearer can be seen as the subject of the predicate, the necessitive can be combined with first persons and third persons in the nominative case. It is questionable whether the necessitive also freely occurs with second persons. It might be expected that second person sentences give rise to ambiguity between a directive reading and a necessitive reading, and are therefore avoided. In section 3.2.5 I gave an example of a second person singular case where the subject implicitly refers to the speaker (70). Below two more examples are given:

- (84) Grjaz', chicher, ni puti ni dorogi, a ty **idi**, **klanjajsja** ... da eshche ne to dadut, ne to net ... (Veyrenc, 1980: 96/ Bunin)  
dirt, wet.snow, no route, no road, but you-NOM go-IMP, bow-IMP-IMPERF ... and still not that they.give, not that not  
'Dirt, wet snow, an invisible road, but you go anyway, and make your bow ... and still they give you something you don't need, or they give you nothing at all ... '
- (85) Nesusvetnaja zhara, a ty **sidi** i **zanimajsja** kak milen'kij. (Vasil'eva, 1969: 40)  
unbearable heat, but you-NOM sit-IMP-IMPERF and study-IMP-IMPERF as sweet.child  
'The heat is unbearable, but you have to sit and study like a sweet child.'

I have seen no examples of sentences where the second person subject does not implicitly refer to the speaker, and I have not attested examples with a second person plural.<sup>43</sup>

Shvedova (1974: 112) observes that in some sentences the subject of the imperative predicate is expressed in the dative; such sentences have a strong colloquial character. Shvedova gives three examples; two of these sentences are given below:

- (86) – Nu, malo li družkov u Kuz'mina? Za vorotnik ponalivajut, a mne **razvozi**. (Shvedova, 1974: 112/ *Literaturnaja gazeta*)  
well, few PRT friends with Kuz'min? behind collar they.pour, but I-DAT deliver-IMP-IMPERF

---

<sup>43</sup>It may be that such sentences, provided with an appropriate context, are possible.

‘Well Kuzmin has lots of friends. They drink lots of booze, and I have to drive them around.’

- (87) Ne xodi, Kolja, èto on opjat’ vypivat’. – A chto zhe, mne vse **kopaj** da **polivaj**? Rab ja, chto li? (ibid./ *Izvestia*)  
 not go, Kolja, it he-NOM again drink-INF. but what PRT, I-DAT all dig-IMP-IMPERF and water-IMP-IMPERF. slave I, what PRT?  
 “Don’t go, Kolja, he only wants to drink again.” “So what, do I have to dig and water the garden? Do you think I am a slave or something?”

The occurrence of the dative in these sentences can be motivated by the fact that the speaker experiences the imperative action as initiated by some other force; as such, the speaker-subject can be seen as the *experiencer* of the force to do the imperative action. This means that the idea of a situation conceptualized in its moment of realization is weakened. The occurrence of the dative in these cases is comparable to the occurrence of the dative in the case of the dative-infinitive construction (see Chapter IV).

Sentences with the verb *byt’* (‘be’) have a special status since they can occur *without* subject, or in sentences where the force is not aimed at the subject itself:

- (88) U nas **bud’** tishina, a im možno šumet’? (*Russkaja Grammatika*, 1980, II: 116)  
 at us be-IMP silence-NOM, but they-DAT may-ADV make.noise-INF?  
 ‘We have to be quiet, but they are allowed to make noise?’

Here the non-agent impulse is directed at the speaker together with some other people (‘us’), and not at the inanimate subject of the verb. The *Russkaja Grammatika* (1980, II: 579) gives the following sentence where a dative is expressed that can be identified with the non-subject force that desires the imperative action:

- (89) Emu i rabota **bud’** legkaja, i zarplata bol’shaja.  
 he-DAT and work-NOM be-IMP easy-ADJ and the income-NOM high-ADJ  
 ‘He wants his work to be easy, and his income to be high.’

This sentence expresses that if it is up to the dative participant, the work should be easy and the income high.

As I argued earlier in 3.2.4, in many sentences the subject is not expressed; in such cases the subject has a generic character (if the verb is personal), e.g.:

- (90) Ja ne ljublju moskovskoj zhizni. Zdes' zhivi ne kak xoches' – kak tetki xotjat. (Shvedova, 1974: 113/ fragment from letter by Pushkin)  
I not like Moscow life. here live-IMP-IMPERF not as want-2sg, like aunts want  
'I don't like Moscow life. Here you can't live the way you want, but you have to live like those old women want you to.'

Sentences like this one are closely related to directive cases, since they share features with second person cases. In this sentence the second person character is underlined by the occurrence of *xochesh'* (want-2-SG). Such cases can be seen as *intermediate* cases between the directive imperative and the necessitive imperative. Sentences with a first or third person, and sentences with impersonal verbs are clear examples of necessitive cases. Sentences with a second person subject are interpreted as directive cases, although in some instances a necessitive interpretation is possible, namely in those cases where *ty* does not refer to the addressee but to the speaker. Some instances of the imperative with personal verbs without subject can be interpreted as clear directive cases, while others share more features with necessitive cases. However, many cases that have a generic interpretation can be classified *both* as directive cases and as necessitive cases; in these cases it is not possible to decide whether the speaker can be seen as the giver of the impulse.

Note furthermore, that the expression of the subject in the case of the necessitive is often facilitated by the contrastive context in which the necessitive occurs: there is a contrast with another explicitly or implicitly given subject. The contrastive context may be marked by a pause before or after the pronoun. (Veyrenc, 1980: 97) Consider the following sentence:

- (91) Vse ushli, a JA – sidi doma i rabotaj.  
all gone, but I-NOM sit-IMP-IMPERF at.home and work-IMP-IMPERF

This sentence has the following structure: 'Everybody is gone, but as far as I am concerned: I have to stay at home and work.'

#### 3.3.3.4 Lack of directive features

The following characteristics point at the difference between the necessitive imperative and the directive imperative:

- The plural directive suffix *-te* does not occur in the case of the second person plural. (although no good examples of such second person plural cases are given in the literature).<sup>44</sup>
- The necessitive can occur with first and third persons, with impersonal verbs, and with dative subjects.
- Absence of a directive intonation (Shvedova, 1974.)
- The clitic *-ka*, which is typical of the directive context, does not occur in the case of the necessitive use of the imperative.
- In contrast to the basic directive imperative, the necessitive imperative can occur in embedded sentences:

- (92) Ja ne pisal stixov. Ja govoril, chto prezhde Zemlej, vodoj i nebom **ovladej**, chtob uznat' derev'ja po odezhde, i po glazam razgljadyvat' ljudej. (Shvedova, 1974: 116/ Lavrov)  
I not wrote poetry. I said, that before Earth, water and sky control-IMP-PERF, in.order know-INF trees by clothing, and by eyes know people  
'I didn't write poetry. I said that first one has to control the earth, the water and the air, in order to understand the trees by their clothing, and the people by their eyes.'

### 3.3.3.5 Word order

In most sentences where the subject is expressed, the necessitive clause has an SV order. I suspect that this order can be motivated by the function of the different constituents in the sentence, and that the general principles governing the word order of Russian also apply in the case of the necessitive imperative. As I argued before, the SV order is typical of cases where there is some contrast with another action, which is a typical necessitive context (see 3.2.3.2 for the SV order in the case of the directive imperative, and 3.3.3.3, on the meaning structure of the necessitive). A VS order occurs in some cases, for example in (80) given above. This sentence is close to an optative imperative. It must be remarked that the VS order is typical of the optative and the conditional use of the imperative. The VS order is possibly chosen here because the speaker focuses on the hypothetical realization of the imperative action; the subject in this

---

<sup>44</sup> According to my informants the subject in sentences with an expressed second person (*ty*) could hypothetically speaking be substituted with *vy*; in which case *-te* is not added to the imperative.

sentence has the character of an afterthought. I will discuss the VS word order of the optative in more detail in 3.5.3.3.<sup>45</sup>

Now that I have discussed some semantic-syntactic features of the necessitive, I will discuss the relation between the necessitive and the directive use of the imperative.

### 3.3.4 The necessitive imperative use and other imperative use

In this subsection I will discuss the meaning of the necessitive imperative by showing how it can be related to the other imperative uses, especially to the directive imperative. I will argue that the necessitive imperative can be seen as an extension of the directive imperative by backgrounding the specific speaker-hearer features of the idea of direction.

In the literature it is normally assumed that the directive imperative use and the necessitive imperative use are semantically closely related uses of the imperative. Ebeling (1956), in his description of the Russian imperative, argues that both the necessitive use and the directive use are *interpretations* of a more general abstract meaning of the imperative that accounts for all the imperative uses. The meaning of the imperative that he gives is “an action fulfilled as the result of a foreign impulse or permission” (1956: 86). The difference between the directive imperative use and the necessitive imperative use is that in the former case the speaker can be seen as the foreign impulse (and the subject is a second person), whereas in the latter case the authorization does not come from a person, but from a whole situation.<sup>46</sup> Following Ebeling’s line of thought, the specific contextual features of the necessitive use and the directive use (*-te*, *-ka*, embedding, etc.) must be seen as contributing to the specific interpretation of the abstract imperative meaning.

In my opinion, the analysis given by Ebeling adequately points at shared features of different imperative uses. A weak point of the analysis, however, is that both directive and necessitive use are treated as having the same status (both are interpretations), whereas this does not seem to be supported by the facts. Firstly, although some instances can be seen as borderline cases between necessitive use and optative or directive use, the necessitive imperative and the directive imperative are clearly

---

<sup>45</sup> A VS order also occurs in the following sentence: I **podaj** ja, i **primi** ja, i **oden’** ja, i za nim i pered nim, vse ja (Vinogradov & Shvedova, 1964: 227/ Plavil’shch.). In this sentence the imperative is accented, and the subject has the character of an addition (‘And THIS I have to do, and THAT I have to do’).

<sup>46</sup> This description is rather unfortunate because in some necessitive cases the authorization may also come from a person, e.g. *Emu i rabota bud’ legkaja i zarplata bol’shaja* (‘For him the work should be easy and the income high.’)

distinguishable, for example because of the presence of first or third person subject. This contrasts with the non-discrete status of the different directive variants, where many uses can be classified differently because of the flexible nature of the classificational parameters. Secondly, the directive imperative use is more basic than the necessitive use because: (a) directive imperative use is more frequent than necessitive imperative use; (b) the necessitive use is more stylistically colored than the directive use; (c) imperatives without additional context are interpreted as directive cases, rather than as necessitive cases, and (d) in some necessitive cases the speaker can, at least partially, be identified with the foreign impulse; this means that the typical feature of the directive imperative ‘speaker direction’ seems, in some way or another, to be prevalent in many necessitive cases as well.

Ebeling’s analysis does not adequately account for the specific relation between the necessitive use and the directive use. Furthermore, his analysis is incomplete. He does not motivate how the necessitive imperative use differs from oppositional forms, and how these differences can be motivated by the abstract meaning of the imperative. The meaning that Ebeling gives for the necessitive, viz. ‘an action realized as the result of a foreign impulse or permission’ can, without further explanation, also be seen as a description for sentences with modal predicates like *dolzhben* and *nado*.<sup>47</sup>

Shvedova (1974) argues that the directive imperative and the necessitive imperative have two different meanings, and can be seen as different grammatical moods. She gives the following arguments for this opinion: (a) there is a typical necessitive imperative construction that has a different syntactic structure than the directive imperative; (b) an independent meaning can be defined for the necessitive; (c) the necessitive has a different intonational pattern than the directive imperative; (d) the necessitive has different oppositional classes; and (e) the subject of the necessitive can occur in the dative case.

The arguments given by Shvedova (1974) are strictly speaking not arguments against a position such as the one taken by Ebeling, but rather arguments against the position that the necessitive imperative use must be seen as a directive imperative use embedded in a different context. This latter position seems to be expressed by Veyrenc (1980: 97), who speaks about a transposition of the direct mode of the directive imperative to the indirect mode.<sup>48</sup> According to such a position, a sentence like (2) should be interpreted as an

---

<sup>47</sup> This can hardly be seen as a shortcoming, since Ebeling’s analysis is part of a rather small article and he does not claim that his analysis is complete.

<sup>48</sup> Veyrenc is not, however, very clear on the question whether one must actually analyze such cases as indirect directives, or whether such cases must be seen as extensions of the directive imperative into the indirect discourse, leading to a change of meaning of the basic directive use.

indirect direction (‘but as for me’): *Vse usbli, a ja ‘sidi doma i rabotaj!’* I agree with Shvedova (1974), that this is not a fully correct analysis. This opinion is supported by the occurrence of embedded necessitives, the occurrence of necessitives with impersonal verbs, inanimate subjects, and probably the absence of the suffix *-te* in the case of the second person plural. A weakness of Shvedova’s analysis, however, is that in many necessitive cases the idea of direction seems to play some part, for example in cases where the speaker agrees with the realization of the imperative action. Furthermore, we find directive cases that share features with necessitive cases, such as those discussed in 3.2.4.

I will recapitulate my main point. It seems to me that the linguistic analysis has to motivate the following facts:

- Different meanings can be given for the necessitive imperative and the directive imperative on the basis of *clear examples* and the absence or presence of particular semantic-syntactic features (intonation, embedding, impersonal constructions, inanimate subject, etc.).
- Some directive cases share features with necessitive uses; in such sentences the feature ‘directivity’ is, at least partly, present.
- Some necessitive cases share features with hortative-optative uses; in such sentences the feature ‘directivity’ is at least partly present.
- The directive imperative is more *basic* than the necessitive imperative (without context the imperative is interpreted as a directive case, the directive imperative is more frequent, there are necessitive cases with directive or hortative features).
- A general meaning can be given for both the necessitive imperative and the directive imperative (see Ebeling, 1956).
- In the general meaning the feature of ‘directivity’, and thus speaker involvement, is abstracted, i.e. pushed to the background.
- The general meaning given by Ebeling (1956) does not motivate the difference between the necessitive use and its oppositional uses (the modal subjective nature, and the absence of tense).

I would like to suggest that the necessitive imperative must be seen as an extended use of the directive imperative by selection and backgrounding of features under contexts. The relation between the necessitive imperative use and the directive imperative use can be analyzed as shown in Figure 3.12.

Figure 3.12

---

**The speaker directs the addressee at  $t_0$  to perform the imperative situation**

**V:  $\rightarrow$  SIT(V) $t_1$**

+ *context*:

- The speaker does not direct some participant present in the immediate speaker-addressee context to realize the imperative situation, because no such participant is available
- The realization of the imperative situation is presented as the result of some force other than the speaker himself (i.e. the speaker cannot be held responsible for the direction; in cases where the speaker agrees with the realization of the imperative situation, the impulse leading to the realization of the situation is presented as the result of some general law or norm)

*Interpretation:*

**The speaker pictures some non-agent force that gives an impulse to the realization of the imperative situation:  $\rightarrow$  SIT(V) $t_1$**

Presupposition:

- $< t_0$  not V, where  $t_0$  is the moment where no impulse is given to realize the situation
- $t_1$  can be seen as the moment of realization of the necessitive situation

The process of extension described here can be reached by selection and backgrounding of features in the following way:

*Selected*: abstracted feature ‘non-agent force gives an impulse to the realization of the situation’

*Backgrounded*: specific ‘speaker-addressee features’ (idea of contributing to the realization of the situation by *uttering* the imperative verb), but partly preserved because by uttering the imperative, the speaker invites the addressee to imagine the force directed at the realization of the imperative situation

---

If we analyze the necessitive in that way, we can motivate the meaning of the necessitive, account for the differences between the necessitive imperative and oppositional uses (more specifically the presence of the feature ‘speaker-involvement’ in the case of the necessitive), and motivate why the directive imperative is more basic than the necessitive

imperative. This approach does not have the shortcomings of an analysis where both the necessitive and the directive imperative are seen as interpretations of one abstract meaning that have equal status. The analysis that I give also leaves room for directive cases that share features with necessitive cases, and necessitive cases that share features with directive cases.

The necessitive imperative is normally treated as a separate imperative use (e.g. Ebeling, 1956), or meaning (e.g. Shvedova, 1974). This contrasts with for example different directive adjustments. The special status of the necessitive can be motivated by the fact that the extension from the basic directive to the necessitive can be analyzed in terms of backgrounding the *central* directive feature 'speaker direction'. In the case of the different directive adjustments discussed in 3.2.4, the idea of 'speaker direction' was not abstracted.

Note that the extension I propose is a reconstruction. It could also be argued for example that the directive imperative must be seen as an extension of the necessitive imperative. I do not think there is any a priori reason why this could not be the case. There is, however, some additional evidence that one can perhaps speak of an extension in the way sketched above. This evidence is provided by the possibility of reconstructing of a path of extension from the directive to the necessitive, as I will discuss below. It is questionable whether a reverse path can be constructed in the same way.

Note furthermore that the necessitive imperative might also be seen as an extension of the *optative* imperative, which I will treat in 3.5. In my opinion, this could be the case indeed. In the case of both the directive imperative and the optative imperative the speaker can be seen as the impulse giver. The occurrence of the two basic types of necessitive cases (those where the speaker agrees with the realization of the imperative action, and those where there is no such identification) can possibly be related to the optative and the directive imperative respectively. I would like to stress that in my analysis it is natural that some instances of the necessitive imperative show more or fewer similarities to other imperative uses. Some instances of the imperative are on the borderline between directive and necessitive cases, while other instances share features with both optative and necessitive cases. In the analysis that I proposed such borderline cases need not pose problems; they can be seen as different instances of the process of selecting and canceling features under contexts.

The analysis of the necessitive as an extension of use of the basic directive imperative is sustained by the occurrence of (directive) cases with generic subjects; such cases can be seen as intermediate 'steps' between the directive and the necessitive use.

The extension from the directive imperative use to the necessitive use can be analyzed in terms of weakening of the speaker-commitment to the realization of the imperative action, and abstraction from the direct speaker-addressee context. This can happen because it is possible to take the perspective of some other force with which the speaker identifies. Sanders & Redeker (1996: 293) define the notion of ‘perspective’ as “the introduction of a subjective point of view that restricts the validity of the presented information to a particular (person) in the discourse”. The following path for the extension of the directive to the necessitive can possibly be given (with an example from English, viz., the verb *go*):

- a. Direct mode: perspective speaker (I said: ‘*go!*’)
- b. Direct mode: perspective non-speaker force (If you are in this situation then: ‘*go!*’)
- c. Indirect mode: perspective speaker (But he *go!*)

In (a) one can speak of a regular directive: the action is conceptualized from the perspective of the speaker, who gives the addressee an impulse to realize the action. In (b) the speaker takes the perspective of the impulse giver, and repeats the impulse given by this force. In (c) one can speak of embedding of the direction: the speaker reports that there is some force that directs the agent to realize the action. In such cases, prototypically with non-second person subjects, the feature of speaker commitment is abstracted even further; the speaker only partially identifies with the impulse giver. The partial identification with the impulse giver accounts for the difference between the necessitive imperative and other forms that express necessity. The necessitive imperative differs from its oppositional forms in two important respects. Firstly, the necessitive imperative often has a subjective modal interpretation, i.e. the speaker expresses his attitude to the proposition. Secondly, the necessitive imperative does not express tense (in contrast to oppositional forms, e.g. *Vse ushli, a ja dolzhen byl sidet’ doma*). If we wish to give an adequate description of the necessitive we have to explain these facts. I have argued, above, that the absence of tense is connected with the fact that in the case of the necessitive, expressing the imperative means conceptualizing the impulse directed at the realization of the imperative situation. In my opinion, this feature is closely related to the so-called subjective modal nature of the necessitive imperative. Below I will briefly discuss this special necessitive imperative feature.

### 3.3.5 Subjective modal features

The so-called subjective modal nature of the necessitive is mentioned by Shvedova (1974), who distinguishes three types of modal subjective interpretations: (i) The speaker finds the action difficult to realize or undesirable; (ii) the speaker finds the action easy to realize, and (iii) the speaker disagrees with the breaking of some norm or habit. According to the *Russkaja Grammatika* (1980), the particular modal subjective features of the necessitive must be seen as *interpretations* of the necessitive meaning, that is, they must be seen as variants of the necessitive meaning that occur in a particular context:

“[I]n a particular context the necessitive form often shows meaning features of condemnation, undesirability, discontent because something is obligated, demanded by someone or forced from the outside. However, the feature of inner rejected instruction is not contained in the meaning of the form itself: it only rests on the necessitive meaning in the context, and in this way the main semantic division in the necessitive form can occur: it can be the obligation forced by an isolated situation, or the obligation dictated by custom, by what is taken to be generally accepted.” (*Russkaja Grammatika*, 1980, II: 117; my translation)

This view seems justified to me; the different uses must be seen as variants of one necessitive meaning.

The problem that remains to be solved is how to relate the different interpretations of the necessitive imperative to its meaning. The solution, I think, must be sought in the notion of *directivity*. In the case of the necessitive the speaker partially identifies with the impulse giver, which leads to the so-called *dynamic construal*, where the action is conceptualized as if the impulse to realize the imperative is given at the moment of speaking. The partial mimicking of the force means that the speaker establishes a closer contact with the narrated events. As such, the necessitive imperative differs from oppositional forms such as *dolzhen*, where the necessity is only indirectly conceptualized (*dolzhen* expresses a state of some referent, that is characterized by a force directed at the realization of some situation, whereas the utterance of the necessitive imperative itself can be seen as the force). I argued above that this feature accounts for the fact that the necessitive does not express tense. Another result of this feature is that the focus is on the fact that the agent is not *expected* to realize the action himself. This means that there is a contrast between the imperative action (SIT  $V_{imp}$ ) and the action(s) expected of the agent (SIT not  $V_{imp}$ ).

If the subject is not the giver of the impulse, it may be that he is forced to act. In such a context it is plausible that the action is a non-desirable action or experienced as very

hard as in (2) above. In (2) the contrastive nature of the obligated action is strengthened by the contrastive context in which it occurs. In this sentence there is a contrast between the action expected of the agent (SIT (not  $V_{imp}$ ), e.g. to go out, just like the others) and the actual imperative action (SIT( $V_{imp}$ )).

Besides cases of type (i) we find cases of type (ii), where the idea of ‘protest’ or ‘resentment’ is totally absent, and where, in *contrast* to type (i), the action is seen as *easy* to accomplish, as in the following sentence:

- (93) A nash Nikolaj ej ni na chto ne nuzhen. A on tjanetsja voobshche ujti za nej. Ona tol’ko **morgni**. (Petrushevskaja, *Tri devushki v golubom*)  
 but our Nikolaj she-DAT not on that not is.needed. but he reaches in.general go.out for her. she just blink-IMP-PERF  
 ‘And she in no way needs our Nikolaj. While he is tempted to go completely for her. She just has to blink.’

How can these two opposite interpretations be linked to each other?

I think that in both cases there is a contrast between the imperative action and the action expected of the agent. In the sentence above, the contrast is connected with the idea of *restriction*. There is some expectation that more actions are necessary than just the imperative action. This means that there is some restriction on the set of necessary actions.<sup>49</sup> The character of restriction of necessity can be seen as a particular interpretation of the necessitive, and is the result of the particular presuppositions of the interpreter and the context in which the necessitive occurs, for example the presence of *tol’ko* in (93). In (93) the idea of restriction is connected with the *conditional* character of the sentence: the necessitive action is enough for another action to occur. This sentence has the structure: For Y to occur it is necessary to realize only X. Although (93) is similar to the conditional use of the imperative, it does not have all the properties of the conditional imperative (division into apodosis and protasis, VS order in the protasis, etc.). As such it can possibly be seen as a *borderline* case between the necessitive use and the conditional use.<sup>50</sup>

---

<sup>49</sup> It can be argued that in the case of the contrastive sentences one can also speak of restriction, namely restriction of the agent to realizing a certain single act. Possibly the feature of ‘restriction’ is present in all the imperative cases, and can be compared to what Percov (1998) calls ‘emotionality’.

<sup>50</sup> A different type can be found in (68). Here there is a restriction relative to some “general standard” (the imperative actions in (68) are generally seen as easy to accomplish). Cases like these with the imperfective aspect have a permissive character and seem only to occur with generic agents, which underlines the relation between this use and the directive imperative use.

The third interpretational type, viz. the speaker disagrees with the breaking of some norm or habit, occurs in sentences with so-called speaker involvement, e.g. (74). In these sentences the modal-subjective interpretation is connected with the fact that the agent of the action is not intending to do the action (as such, he breaks with some norm or habit) and the speaker states that there is some necessity to do the imperative action. This means that in this case there is a contrast between the real world, where (not V) is the case, and the ideal hypothetical world, where (V) is the case. It could be argued that a sentence like (74) must be seen as a case of volition: the speaker wishes the realization of the action conveyed by the imperative. A counter-argument to this is that necessitive cases like these do not *only* express the wish of the speaker for the imperative situation: the speaker's wish for the realization of a certain action is always justified by pointing at 'objective' factors. The necessity is always presented as the result of custom, habit, or other 'objective' factors.

Necessitive cases like (74) occur in both the imperfective and the perfective aspect, in contrast to regular necessitive cases that are normally imperfective. Further it must be noted that in the case of regular necessitive use we find that the word order is normally SV, whereas in the case of this type we find both SV and VS word order. Sentences like these can be seen as borderline cases between necessitive use and directive or optative use. The relation between the optative use and this type of necessitive is underlined by the occurrence of necessitive sentences with a VS order and a perfective aspect as in (80), features that are typical of the optative use.<sup>51</sup> Whether or not the speaker must be seen as the giver of the impulse is a question that can possibly not be answered; only if the language user has to make this decision this is a relevant question.<sup>52</sup>

### 3.3.6 Conclusion

The necessitive imperative can be defined as follows: there is some non-agent force that directs the agent to perform the imperative action:  $\rightarrow$  SIT (V). I have proposed to analyze the necessitive as an extended case of the directive imperative. In the case of the directive imperative it is the speaker who gives the impulse to realize of the action, whereas in the case of the necessitive it is a non-speaker impulse. In the case of the necessitive, however, there is a partial indentification of the speaker with the impulse giver, leading to the

---

<sup>51</sup> Vinogradov & Shvedova (1964) classify cases with the structure [X, *take* V<sub>imp</sub>] as optative cases.

<sup>52</sup> It may be asked for example if the suffix *-te* occurs in the second person plural, and whether we find embedded cases; I have not, however, seen any such examples.

feature of dynamic realization. This partial identification is absent in the case of oppositional forms, and can account for both the absence of tense and the presence of so-called subjective modal features.

### 3.4 Narrative use of the imperative

#### 3.4.1 Introduction

In this section I will give an analysis of the so-called narrative use of the imperative (in short: narrative imperative). I will argue that the narrative imperative can possibly be seen as an extension of the necessitive imperative where the feature ‘non-agent impulse’ is weakened or cancelled.

The section has the following structure. In 3.4.2 I will introduce the narrative imperative and define its meaning. In 3.4.3 I will briefly discuss semantic-syntactic features of the narrative imperative. In 3.4.4 I will discuss the relation between the narrative imperative and the other imperative uses. In 3.4.5 I will discuss an oppositional (and in some cases co-occurring) form of the narrative imperative, viz. the so-called *vsjat*<sup>2</sup>-construction, and show how this oppositional form differs from the narrative imperative.

#### 3.4.2 The meaning of the narrative imperative

The following sentences are examples of narrative imperatives:

- (94) I vdruk togda, v tu sekundu, kto-to i shepni mne na uxo. (Veyrenc, 1980: 104/ Dostoevskij)  
and suddenly then, in that second, someone-NOM and whisper-IMP-PERF me in ear  
‘And suddenly then, in that second, someone *whispered* something in my ear.’
- (95) ... Stala ja sosedok rassprashivat', chto Katja bez menja delaet; a oni mne vse i rasskazhi ... (Prokopovich, 1969: 56/ Nekrasov)  
started I women.neighbors interrogate, what Katja without me does, but they-NOM me all and tell-IMP-PERF...’’  
‘I started to interrogate the neighbor women what Katja was doing without me, but they *just told* me everything.’

- (96) Noch'ju, byvalo, prosnesh'sja, s polatej vniz gljanesh', a on ves' belyj pered obrazom i skvoz' zuby shipom shipit: "Ty menja s-slyshish"? Ty s-slyshish'?" Ja i skazhi emu odin raz: slyshu, govorju. Ke-ek on zatrjaset'sja da vskochit, a uzhe ja ne mogu, iz menja smex nosom idet.<sup>53</sup> (E. Zamjatin, *Slovo predstavljaetsja tovarishču cburiginu*)  
(...) I and tell-IMP-PERF him one time: I.listen, I.say. (...)  
'At night, it often happened that you woke up, and you looked down from your sleeping bench, and he would be in front of the icon, looking all white, hissing through his teeth: "Do you hear me? Do you hear me?" And once I *just told* him: "I am listening", I said. He starts to shake and jumps up, but I can't hold myself anymore, and am overcome with laughter.'
- (97) Bibliotekarsha poshla vpolnjat' trebovanie, a moj malen'kij istorik to sklonis' nad prilavkom, to pomashi rukoj komu iz znakomyx, to ulybnis' mne. (Vasil'eva, 1969: 42)  
library.miss went deal.with order, but my little historian then bend-IMP-PERF over counter, then waved-IMP-PERF with.hand who-DAT from his.friends, then smile-IMP-PERF at.me  
'The library miss went to deal with the order, but my little historian *bent over* the counter, *waved* to some of his friends, or *smiled* at me.'
- (98) Ego zhduť, a on i opozdaj na celyj chas. (*Russkaja Grammatika*, 1980, II: 625)  
him they.wait, but he-NOM and come.late-IMP-PERF on whole hour  
'They waited for him, but he *was* one whole hour *late*.'

In the case of the narrative use there is not only abstraction from the directive context, such that the narrative can occur with first and third person subjects, but also abstraction from the feature 'impulse'. In the sentences given above the idea of a foreign impulse is absent, or at least extremely reduced. The imperative form is used to express that the imperative situation is unexpected. The action may be unexpected in the sense that it is a *sudden* action, in (94); such actions often occur with adverbs that indicate the suddenness of the action like *vdrug*. The action may also be unexpected in the sense that it is an *inappropriate* action, as in (98).

Following Mazon (1914: 94), I use the term 'narrative imperative' for the imperative use under discussion because the imperative occurs in what is called *narrative* discourse; this is the type of discourse where past events are described in temporal order.<sup>54</sup> Another

---

<sup>53</sup> <http://www.magister.msk.ru:8085/library/prose/zamy002.htm>

<sup>54</sup> Note that Mazon (1914: 71-72) also uses the term 'narrative imperative' for uses that I call necessitive. The narrative imperative under discussion he calls 'perfective narrative or historic imperative' (1914: 94).

term that is used in the literature is ‘impérative de dramatisation’ (e.g. Veyrenc, 1980: 86) or ‘descriptive imperative’ (Ebeling, 1956: 90).

The narrative imperative is typical of the spoken language, and occurs mostly in colloquial style discourse and in so-called ‘skaz’ style discourse (Prokopovich, 1969; Russkaja Grammatika, 1980, II: 625). As such, the narrative is *not* a neutral way to express unexpectedness in modern literary Russian. On the basis of the data at my disposal, I suspect that the narrative imperative was more frequently used in the nineteenth century than in the twentieth century. It seems probable that in the nineteenth century the restriction of the narrative imperative to colloquial discourse and *skaz*-style discourse was less strong.<sup>55</sup>

Something should be said here about the oppositional forms of the narrative imperative. In cases where the unexpected nature of the situation is expressed by forms other than the narrative imperative, such as in (94), the narrative imperative can be paraphrased with a past tense or with the historic present (*I vdrug togda, v tu sekundu, kto-to shepnul/shepchet mne na uxo*; and suddenly then, in that second, someone whispered/ whispers me in ear). In cases where the unexpected nature is only expressed by the narrative imperative, the imperative can be paraphrased with a construction with the verb *vzjat* ‘(take)’ conjuncted with a perfective verb in the past tense (henceforth: *vzjat*-construction), for example *Ego zhdut, a on vzjal da i opozdal na cebyj čas*. I will discuss the difference in meaning between the narrative imperative and the *vzjat*-construction in 3.4.5.

The meaning of the narrative imperative can be formulated as follows:

**Unexpected realization (→ SIT (V)) of the imperative situation (by the subject expressed in the nominative if the verb is personal).**

As I will argue below, the narrative imperative can be seen as an imperative use where the feature of ‘impulse’ or ‘force’ is backgrounded or even cancelled, and where the presupposition that the action breaks the expected course of events is selected as the meaning of the imperative. This means that the frame, that I used to model the directive use and the necessitive use cannot be applied to the narrative imperative, since the parameters ‘force’ and ‘object of force’ do not apply in the case of the narrative. Nevertheless, a possible way to analyze the narrative imperative is to identify the force with something like ‘fate’.

---

<sup>55</sup> It may be that in contemporary Russian there is a tendency to use the narrative imperative only with a specific class of verbs. I have attested, for example, several instances of the construction (*Nu*) *ja i skazbi* (‘I just said’).

Some non-observable and non-identifiable force gives an impulse to the realization ( $\rightarrow$  SIT (V)) of the imperative situation (by the subject expressed in the nominative if the verb is personal).

Under this analysis the frame in Figure 3.13 can be given.

Figure 3.13

| Force   | Goal (in the case of the fate analysis)                | Subject of situation            | Object of force (if the force is analyzed as 'fate') |
|---|--|---------------------------------|--|
| Absent (or partly present if the force is identified with 'fate') | $\rightarrow$ SIT(V <sub>+aspect</sub> )t <sub>1</sub> | S= 1/ 2/ 3sg<br>-pl/ impersonal | S (if V=personal)                                    |

We can give the following presuppositions for the narrative imperative:

- (i) The imperative situation breaks the expected course of events
- (iii) By using the imperative the addressee is invited to imagine the realization of the imperative situation

I will say more about the validity of this analysis in 3.4.4 below, where I discuss the relation of the narrative imperative to the other imperative uses.

An important feature of the narrative imperative is the feature of *dynamic realization*. As I discussed in 3.1, this feature is part of every imperative use, and accounts for the absence of *tense*; for the analysis of tense, see 3.1. Note that most linguists describe the meaning of the narrative imperative as an unexpected action in the past'. This description fails to take account of the feature of 'dynamic realization', and the relation between the narrative imperative construal and the construal of the other imperative uses. This means that it is insufficient.

### 3.4.3 Semantic-syntactic features

Before discussing the meaning of the narrative imperative, and the relation between the narrative imperative and the other imperative uses, I will briefly discuss the relevant semantic-syntactic features of the narrative imperative:

- (i) +aspect perfective
- (ii) –tense
- (iii) +subject in the nominative (and occurrence of impersonal constructions)
- (iv) occurrence of *i*, *da* ('and') before the imperative
- (v) co-occurrence of the *vzjal'*-construction
- (vi) + embedded narratives
- (vii) – *-te* or *-ka*
- (viii) no fixed word order

For the discussion of tense, I refer the reader to 3.1, but I will make a short remark. The interpretation of the narrative imperative as a *past* event must be explained by the *narrative* nature of the imperative. Since narrative discourse refers to situations that are already known to the speaker, the narrative imperative always refers to a past event. I think that the typical narrative nature of the narrative imperative must – either synchronically or diachronically – be attributed to the 'fate' character of the force. In the case of the narrative imperative the speaker expresses that the imperative action is a non-expected action in the narrative chain of events. This unexpectedness can be analyzed as the result of some force ('fate') that gives an impulse to the realization of the imperative situation. The 'fate' character is absent in the case of interjections like *pryg*, which can there also be used for future events.

#### 3.4.3.1 Aspect

The aspect of the narrative is always perfective. The perfective aspect is natural for the narrative because the narrative typically indicates an action in a chain of events; typical of such cases is the perfective aspect (see Barentsen, 1985). Ebeling (1956: 90), however, argues that imperfective cases occur, and gives the following sentence with a non-telic situation:

- (99) Vse vzjalis' na rabote, a on lezhi na pechke. (Ebeling, 1956: 90)  
everyone took.off for work, but he lie-IMP-IMPERF on stove

Ebeling's translation: 'Everyone took to his work, but he lay on the stove.'

Ebeling is probably mistaken here; this case must be seen as a necessitive case ('Everyone took to his work, but he has to lay on the stove'), which is underlined by the contrastive context, and the absence of the particle *i*, which one would expect in the case of a narrative imperative.<sup>56</sup>

### 3.4.3.2 Subject

Narrative use of the imperative occurs with all subjects in the nominative.<sup>57</sup> Second person cases are very rare, but Vinogradov gives the following examples:

(100) A ty **pojdi i skazhi** ob ètom babushke? (Vinogradov, 1947: 552)  
but you-NOM go-IMP-PERF and tell-IMP-PERF about that grandmother?  
'And you *just went* and *told* grandmother about that?'

(101) A vy i **povert'** emu? (ibid.)  
but you-NOM-PL and believe-IMP-PERF him?  
'And you *just believed* him?'

In my opinion the infrequent occurrence of the second person has to do with the narrative discourse: it is pragmatically odd to tell someone what this person did himself. This pragmatic 'restriction' does not apply to the sentences given here because they are questions.<sup>58</sup>

The narrative imperative also occurs in sentences with impersonal verbs (with a dative subject in the role of experiencer):

(102) [N]am ved' tak by vazhno uznat', ne videl li kto ix, v vos'mom-to chasu, v kvartire-to, chto i mne i **voobrazhis'** sejchas, chto vy tozhe mogli by skazat'. (Prokopovich, 1969: 56/ Dostoevskij)

---

<sup>56</sup> This specific example was already given in Mazon (1914: 72), where he classifies it under 'Impératif narratif ou historique de l'action'. Note, however, that Mazon also uses this term for necessitive cases.

<sup>57</sup> I have not seen examples where the subject is a first person plural noun. I suspect, however, that such sentences are in principle possible.

<sup>58</sup> Another exception is (105), but this sentence is an instance of the *take*-construction.

we-DAT PRT so IRR important know, not saw PRT who them, in eight-PRT hour, in house-PRT, that and I-DAT and imagine-REFL-IMP-PERF just.now, that you also could IRR tell

'You know, it would have been so important for us to find out whether someone saw them, after seven o'clock, in that house, that I suddenly *realized* just now that you could have told me that yourself.'

### 3.4.3.3 Co-occurrence of other forms

In the vast majority of cases, the narrative imperative occurs with the conjunction-particle *i* ('and'), or *da i*. This conjunction-particle is always placed immediately before the imperative. The same conjunction-particle also occurs in the case of the *vzjat'*-construction (see 3.4.4). About the different uses of the particle *i*, Vasilyeva (1972: 134) remarks: "The particle *i* comes from the conjunction *i* 'and' and in many cases retains its copulative meaning, while at the same time assuming new meanings and shades of meaning". In the case of the narrative imperative, the function of conjunction is not clear in most instances of the construction. An exception is the following sentence, where *i* also occurs at the beginning of a phrase; in this sentence the relation between the particle *i* and its copulative meaning is more evident:

- (103) (...) Proshlo goda dva – **i popadis'** mne pis'mo ot nego Varvare ... (Prokopovich, 1969: 57/ Skitalec)  
 (...) passed.by year two, and fell.in.hands-IMP-PERF I-DAT letter-NOM from him to.Varvara  
 'About two years passed by – and a letter from him to Varvara *fell into my hands*.'

An explanation must be given of the contribution of *i* to the narrative construction. It seems that in most sentences *i* is obligatory; in a sentence like (98), for example, the particle cannot be left away (*?Ego zdut, a on opozdaj na celyj chas*). On the other hand, there are sentences where it does not occur, for example in (97). In this particular sentence the absence of the particle may be motivated by the special meaning of intermittent repetition.<sup>59</sup>

---

<sup>59</sup> However, an alternative analysis has to be given for the absence of the particle in the following sentence from a well-know fable by Krylov (cited in Vinogradov, 1947: 550): *No skvorushka uslysb' kak svajjat solov'ja* (...) ('But the starling heard how they praised the nightingale'). It may be that the non-occurrence of the particle is influenced by the metric structure of the text.

It may be that the function of *i* in the case of the narrative imperative is to create a rupture in the narrative discourse; this rupture has the effect of focussing on the imperative event following in the narration. I suspect that the use of *i* is related to the use of *i* in sentences with a past tense like the following:

- (104) Okazyvaetsja, Tat'jana Nikolaevna ego blizkaja rodstvennica. A ja *i* ne znal, *i* ne slyshal nichego ob ètom. (Vasilyeva, 1972: 135)  
turns.out, Tat'jana Nikolaevna his near family. but I and not knew, and not heard nothing about that  
'It turns out that Tat'jana Nikolaevna is a close relative of his. And I didn't even know, and didn't hear anything about it.'

In this sentence the particle *i* has a so-called 'emphatic' meaning, close to *dažbe* ('even'). It stresses that the situation to which it is applied, is the least expected situation in the given context. In the case of the narrative imperative a similar analysis can be given, since the narrative situation expresses an unexpected situation in the narrative discourse.

Another form that co-occurs with the narrative is *voz'mi*, the imperative form of *vzjat'* ('to take'), occurring with the particles *i*, *da* or the combination *da i*:

- (105) Ja voobchshe saskuchilas'. Po rabote, po shkole, po ljudam. A vy **voz'mi i pridi** (...). (Prokopovich, 1969: 56/ Ju. German)  
I totally was.fed.up. about work, about school, about people. but you-NOM-PL take-IMP-PERF and come-IMP-PERF (...)  
'I was totally fed up, with my work, with school, with people. And you *suddenly came*.'

The verb *voz'mi* co-occurring with the narrative imperative is an instance of the construction with '*vzjat'*'. This construction can occur in the imperative, past tense, perfective present, subjunctive, or infinitive mood, conjuncted with a verb with the same tense or mood. In this construction the verb *vzjat'* can be seen as a modal auxiliary that has lost its original lexical meaning ('to take') and valence. The construction with *vzjat'* and past tense is very similar to the narrative imperative, but shows some differences, especially the absence of the feature of *dynamic realization*, which is typical of the imperative. I will discuss this construction and the differences from the imperative in 3.4.5.

#### 3.4.3.4 Absence of directive features

The narrative cannot be seen as a directive use, which is underlined by some syntactic-semantic features:

- absence of the suffix *-te* in the case of a second person plural (see (101) and (105) above)
- no attestation of the suffix *-ka*
- occurrence of embedded cases (e.g. (102) above)
- occurrence of impersonal cases

These features point at the non-directive nature of the narrative, that is, they show that in the case of the narrative the speaker does not give an impulse to the addressee.

#### 3.4.3.5 Word order

There is no fixed word order for the narrative imperative; the word order seems to be governed by the general pragmatic rules of word order for Russian. In most cases the subject occurs before the verb. This can be motivated in the same way as the SV order in the case of the directive use and the necessitive use (see 3.2.3.2 and 3.3.3.5): the situation expressed by the narrative is often contrasted with another explicitly given, or implied situation. Note, however, that other orders occur as well. This is the case for example in (103), with an animate dative participant and an inanimate subject, or in the sentence below, where we find a VSO order (with an accent on the V):

- (106) [U] nej na tabakerke ee sobstvennyj portret, kogda eshche ona nevestoj byla, let shest'desjat nazad. Vot i uroni ona tabakerku (...). (Prokopovich, 1969: 53/ Dostoevskij)  
 at her on snuffbox her own portrait, when still she bride was, year sixteen ago. Well and loose-IMP-PERF she-NOM snuffbox (...)  
 'She had a snuffbox with her own portrait on it, dating from the time when she was still a bride, sixty years ago. But then she *just lost* the snuffbox.'

#### 3.4.4 The narrative imperative and other imperative use

In this section I will discuss the meaning of the narrative imperative by showing how it can be related to the other imperative uses. I will argue that the narrative can possibly be seen as an extension of the necessitive imperative. Before giving my analysis, I will briefly

say something about the different opinions that exist in the literature about the relation of the narrative to the other imperative uses.

Different explanations are given in the literature for the occurrence of the narrative imperative. Three of such explanations, and the type of analysis that I prefer, are given:

- (i) The narrative imperative is not genetically related to the other imperative uses but must be seen as a relict of another form (Stender-Petersen, 1930; Vinogradov, 1947)
- (ii) The narrative imperative is an instance of another construction (Isachenko, 1960)
- (iii) The narrative imperative is an instance or interpretation of a more general imperative meaning (Ebeling, 1956)
- (iv) The narrative imperative must be seen as an extension of other imperative use with an independent status (my analysis)

I will briefly discuss these analyses here.

The first opinion is put forward by Stender-Petersen (1930). He argues that when the aorist disappeared in Russian, the imperative, which showed morphological overlap with the aorist, took over some of its functions, especially the non-perfect past tense character, and attributed some features to the meaning of the new aorist form, viz. modal nuances like unexpectedness of the action. According to Stender-Petersen, the narrative imperative can be seen as a modern variant of the aorist.

Stender-Petersen's reconstruction is discussed by Isachenko (1960), who rejects the analysis on two grounds: (i) the narrative imperative cannot be seen as a past tense form, but must be seen as a form whose use to refer to past events is comparable to the historic present, (ii) the narrative imperative has a strong expressive meaning, which we do not find in the aorist.

Isachenko's criticism of Stender-Petersen's analysis seems partly valid to me. Especially the first remark that the narrative imperative must be seen as a use comparable to the historic use of the imperfective present indicative, is compatible with my idea that in the case of the narrative one can speak of dynamic realization. The second remark made by Isachenko is not justified, in my opinion, because Stender-Petersen argues that the imperative *attributed* some functions to the aorist. It remains unclear in Stender-

Petersen's analysis, however, both why this happened, and how the modern narrative imperative can still be seen as a form that functions like the aorist.<sup>60</sup>

Further evidence against the position taken by Stender-Petersen is that in other languages the imperative can also be used to express notions like unexpectedness. This is the case for example in some variants of Arabic. The basic function of the imperative form in these is to express directivity; but the same form can also be used in a way quite similar to that of the Russian narrative use (cf. Palva, 1977, 1984). In these variants of Arabic the so-called 'descriptive imperative' is used to highlight a sudden or unexpected turn in the narrative, or to describe a quick or rapid succession of events. Palva argues on the basis of synchronic data that this is a case of diachronic change. According to him the imperative was first used in a way more similar to the directive use of the imperative; by using the imperative the speaker establishes a closer contact between himself and the listeners, which gives it an exclamatory character. Palva claims that when the form was used in several successive sentences, the idea of suddenness and unexpectedness was weakened, and this development resulted in a new, secondary function of the descriptive imperative.<sup>61</sup> He states: "The form became a special kind of narrative consecutive form expressing quick succession, a development hardly possible without a weakening of the original expressive power as the result of frequent use" (Palva, 1977: 26).

Although one must be careful about generalizing over languages, the Arabic data give some interesting information. They provide us with some evidence that something like *unexpectedness* may well be semantically related to something like *directivity*. However, the exact nature of this relation remains unclear under such an analysis.<sup>62</sup> Thus it is not clear whether in Russian narrative cases the relation to the directive use is still present, or whether we must speak of a diachronic change, as is claimed to be the case for Arabic. Furthermore it remains unclear in the analysis for Arabic precisely how directivity is related to something like 'an exclamatory character' or 'close contact with the hearer' in terms of semantic transfers.

A second way to explain the occurrence of the narrative imperative is suggested by Isachenko (1960), who argues that the narrative imperative can possibly be seen as an

---

<sup>60</sup> There may also be formal diachronic arguments against Stender-Petersen's analysis (especially the fact that the morphological overlap of the imperative and the aorist was so marginal that the suggested change of function seems very unlikely). I will, however, not go into them here.

<sup>61</sup> He has no diachronic data to show this.

<sup>62</sup> Other evidence for the relation between 'unexpectedness' and 'directivity' is the use of the construction with *laten* ('to let') and *nou* ('now') in Dutch. Most narrative imperative sentences can be paraphrased with this construction, e.g. *Wij wachtten op hem, maar laat hij nou een uur te laat komen* (translation of (98) in Dutch).

elliptical construction where the idea of ‘to think’ is not expressed, or as a construction that derived from such a construction. Isachenko argues this as follows: “It is not impossible that the construction of the type *a on i vernis’* is in some way derived from the elliptical abbreviation of the sentence: *a on [podumat]: ‘vernis’!*. (...) It must not be forgotten that the verb *vzjat’*, occurring in the stereotypical construction of the type *voz’mi da i vernis’*, has the meaning of *vzdumat’* (‘take it into one’s head’)” (Isachenko, 1960: 501).

It seems to me that the analysis suggested by Isachenko may be right, but there are a number of reasons which make it less plausible, or in any case incomplete. First of all, the evidence given by Isachenko for the occurrence of the narrative imperative is partly based on the meaning of the *vzjat’*-construction; this construction may be close in meaning to the narrative imperative, but not identical. Secondly, Isachenko does not explicitly explain *how* the expression (or omission) of something like *podumat’* could lead to the meaning of ‘unexpectedness’. Thirdly, it remains unclear to me how one could argue that something like ‘*vzdumat’*’ is expressed in sentences without nominative subject. The idea of ‘*vzdumat’*’ is, I think, also absent in many cases with a nominative subject, especially in sentences with non-animate subjects. If one wishes to account for such cases, it must be argued that there has been a diachronic change. First the idea of ‘*podumat’*’ was left out in sentences with animate subjects, leading to the interpretation of unexpectedness, and subsequently the form could also be used in contexts where the idea of ‘*podumat’*’ was absent. To sustain the analysis suggested by Isachenko, diachronic data would be necessary; unfortunately, I have no such data at my disposal. The earliest instance of the narrative imperative I have attested is given by Sobolevskij (1962 [1907]: 155), who touches on the possibility of using the narrative imperative use to indicate a quickly realized action; he gives the following example dating from 1518:

(107) Theofan” starec” s” brat’eju i starosta ... oni vozmi obraz” Prechistye da povedi,  
(Sobolevskij, 1962 [1907]: 155/ Ak. Jur. 30)

Theofan elderly monk with brothers and village.elder ... they take-IMP-PERF icon  
of.pure.mother.god and bring-IMP-PERF,

The elderly monk Theofan with his brothers and the village elder ... they *took* the icon of  
the pure mother of God and *brought* it,

This sentence seems to be an example of the narrative imperative proper, where the verb *take* occurs in its original meaning.

Diachronic data will have to explain the exact relation between the *vzjat’*-construction and the narrative, and establish whether the narrative imperative occurred through the influence of the *vzjat’*-construction, or vice versa. Nevertheless, on the basis of synchronic

data, I suspect that the narrative imperative occurred independently of the *vzjat'*-construction ; the occurrence of the *vzjat'*-construction in the narrative imperative mood was probably facilitated by the existing narrative imperative use (see 3.4.5 for an analysis of the *vzjat'*-construction ).

A third way to explain the occurrence of the narrative imperative is proposed by Ebeling (1956), who claims that both in the case of the directive imperative use and in the case of the narrative imperative use, we find the feature of 'unexpectedness'. He argues (1956: 86) that in the case of the narrative imperative "we can speak of a foreign impulse, because the action is presented as not in accordance with the preceding actions, as breaking the course of events. Thus the word 'foreign' in our definition does not point solely at the actor, but at the natural flow of events as a whole (and so it must be understood in the first and second types also [i.e. other imperative uses])".

In my opinion, the analysis given by Ebeling is adequate since it relates the feature of 'unexpectedness' present in the narrative use to the directive imperative uses, but the actual explanation that he gives is insufficient. Firstly, the relation between the notion of 'direction' and 'unexpectedness' remains vague and unexplained in the description given by Ebeling. Secondly, if we follow the line of thought proposed by Ebeling we have to give the following general definition for the imperative: 'an action that breaks the natural course of events'. In my opinion, this description cannot account for the different imperative uses. Thirdly, in his analysis the narrative imperative is treated as one of the different interpretations of the imperative, having essentially the same status as the other uses. This does not seem to be sustained by the intuitions of native speakers. Muravickaja (1973), for example, claims that speakers of Russian do not relate the narrative imperative to other imperative uses (whereas for example speakers relate the directive imperative to the necessitive imperative).<sup>63</sup> Furthermore, there are no borderline cases between the narrative imperative and other imperative uses. This suggests that the narrative imperative has a clear independent conceptual status. This conceptual status can be sustained by the absence of the notion of 'a foreign impulse' in the case of the narrative.<sup>64</sup>

---

<sup>63</sup> Although this claim is not based on psycholinguistic evidence, I think that the narrative does indeed have a special status in the imperative complex, because the idea of a foreign impulse is cancelled or weakened.

<sup>64</sup> Another suggestion to explain the occurrence of the narrative is made by Percov (1998). In his analysis, Percov claims that the narrative imperative can be seen as a special extension of the directive imperative where only the feature of expressiveness is preserved. Although I think that the strategy that he takes to relate the narrative imperative to the other imperative uses is right, I think his specific explanation is insufficient. It remains unclear to me what the feature 'expressiveness' actually means, and how this feature constitutes the meaning of the narrative imperative.

In my opinion, the narrative imperative can best be reconstructed as an extension of the necessitive imperative where the feature of a ‘non-agent impulse’ is cancelled, and the feature of ‘unexpectedness’ is selected and strengthened, reoccurring as the meaning of the imperative. This process of extension can be showed if we proceed from the necessitive meaning as in Figure 3.14.

Figure 3.14

---

**There is some non-agent force that directs the subject to perform the imperative action: SIT (not V) → SIT(V)**

*presupposes:*

There is no intention of the agent to do the imperative action, which implies that the agent is not expected to realize the imperative situation.

+ *context:*

- (i) the action takes place before the moment of utterance
- (ii) the imperative situation occurs after another situation (is embedded in the narration)
- (iii) the action can be controllable or not controllable
- (iv) there is no force available in the context (for the speaker to identify with) that directs the realization of the imperative action (although in some cases it may be argued that the situation can be attributed to fate)
- (v) sometimes explicit indication of unexpectedness (*vdrug, vot* etc.)

*Interpretation:*

Because of (iv), the action cannot be seen as the result of a foreign impulse; the interaction between the definition given above and the narrative context leads to the selection of the presuppositional property of unexpectedness as the meaning of the narrative:

**Expression of the unexpected (→ SIT (V)) of the action (and consequently the contrast between (V) and (not V))**

*Selected:* Unexpected realization of the imperative situation

*Cancelled:* Idea of a foreign impulse/ *Weakened:* Idea of a foreign impulse; the idea of a foreign impulse may partly be preserved in the idea of ‘fate’

---

It could be argued that the action is conceptualized *as if* it is induced by some unknown force, and is thus unexpected. For the conceptualizer, experiencing a sudden and unexpected action by some agent has the same effect as the situation where some non-observable force gives a ‘push’ to the agent to perform the action.<sup>65</sup> As such this can partly be compared to what is called ‘resultative perception’ or ‘fictive change’ as discussed in Matsumoto (1996), where the current state of the object is perceived as the result of a possible past history.

I do not think, however, that in the narrative imperative the idea of resultative change is preserved in modern Russian. It is possible that it can be seen as a diachronic step, leading to the present meaning. It could be argued that a trace of this meaning is preserved in the existence of cases with ‘uncontrolled’ situations where the agent is not intentionally planning the action, but is overwhelmed by the action, e.g.:

- (108) V ètu-to Dunjashu i vljubis’ Akim! Da tak, kak prezhde nikogda ne vljubljasja. (Vinogradov, 1947: 550 / Turgenev)  
 in that PRT Dunjasha and fall.in.love.IMP-PERF Akim-NOM. yes so, as before never not fell.in.love  
 ‘Akim *fell in love* with that Dunjasha, as he had never fallen in love before.’
- (109) Barin tvoj prikazal mne otnesti k ego Dune zapisochku, a ja i pozabud’, gde Dunja-to ego zhivet. (A. Pushkin, *Povesti pokojnogo Ivana Petrovicha Belkina*)  
 master your ordered me take to his Dunja note, but I-NOM and forget-IMP-PERF where Dunja PRT his lives  
 ‘Your master ordered me to take the note to his Dunja, but I *forgot* where his Dunja lived.’

In this case the presence of a non-agent impulse might be identified with a non-observable force. It could be argued that one meaning must be attributed to the narrative imperative. As such, cases like these all express an unexpected action, without reference to some non-subject force. This means that the idea of a foreign impulse is not *backgrounded*, but *cancelled*. On the other hand, it may also be argued in the case of the narrative, the feature of a foreign impulse is backgrounded more in some cases than

---

<sup>65</sup> Another albeit similar way to preserve the idea of a foreign impulse is to analyze the narrative imperative as a use where it is the speaker himself that ‘directs’ the realization of the imperative action. In the narrative context, the speaker can be seen as the creator of the narration. As such, the speaker can act as if he can manipulate the actions of the participants in the narration by directing them to *perform* an action that is not expected of them.

others, whereas in the case of other forms or constructions, such as the construction with *kak* + perfective present, the idea of a foreign impulse is totally absent.<sup>66</sup>

It must be noted that for the language user there is probably no clear relation between the narrative imperative and the other imperative uses. Muravickaja (1973) therefore does not take account of the narrative imperative in her 'psycholinguistic' tests for the distinction between the different imperative uses. I think that Bondarko & Bulanin (1967: 120) are right when they remark that the narrative imperative can be seen as a borderline case of homonymy, rather than as a case of polysemy. The fact that language users do not perceive the relation between the different uses, does not mean, however, that the linguist cannot point at shared features. I think that the feature of 'dynamic realization' is shared by all the different imperative uses. This may explain the 'vivid' and 'lively' character of the narrative and the absence of tense, which are otherwise difficult to explain. This feature cannot, however, be seen as the meaning of the form, which explains why language users do not relate the meaning of the narrative imperative to the other imperative uses.

As I mentioned before, the narrative imperative can be paraphrased with the *vzjat'*-construction. In the next section I will briefly discuss this construction. I will argue that the meaning of the narrative imperative cannot be seen as identical to the meaning of the *vzjat'*-construction .

### 3.4.5 The *vzjat'*-construction

In this subsection I will briefly discuss the meaning of one of the *oppositional* forms of the narrative imperative, namely the construction with the verb *vzjat'* ('take') that can occur in the indicative, past tense, subjunctive, infinitive and imperative mood. I will henceforth use the term '*vzjat'*-construction' for this construction. I will devote a relatively large amount of attention to the meaning of the *vzjat'*-construction for the following reason. Some linguists, such as Isachenko (1960), treat the narrative imperative as a special kind of *vzjat'*-construction, namely a *vzjat'*-construction where the verb *vzjat'* is left out. Often the descriptions given of the *vzjat'*-construction are rather general, such that the difference in meaning and use between the *vzjat'*-construction and the narrative imperative is not made clear.<sup>67</sup> In this section I will try to describe the

---

<sup>66</sup> A possible test to resolve this problem would be to see if uncontrolled verbs are more typical of the narrative than of other constructions that express similar notions.

<sup>67</sup> Consider for example the following description of the *vzjat'*-construction given in the *Slovar' Russkogo Jazyka*: "Uprotrebljaetsja v sochetanijax s sojuzami *da, i, da i, i sledujushchimi glagolom v znachenii vspomogatelnogo glagola dlja vyrazhenija vnezapnogo ili neozhidannogo dejstvija*." (It is used in

meaning of the *vzjat'*-construction, and try to make some suggestions as to how the construction differs from the narrative imperative. I will start my discussion with some of the relevant semantic and syntactic features of the *vzjat'*-construction in Russian, and then I say something about the meaning of the *vzjat'*-construction.

#### 3.4.5.1 Semantic-syntactic features of the *vzjat'*-construction

In the *vzjat'*-construction we find the following forms:

- a. The verb *vzjat'* in the present tense, subjunctive mood (past tense + *byl* infinitive + *by*), past tense, imperative mood, or infinitive.
- b. The conjunction *da, i, or da i*.
- c. A perfective verb with the same mood or tense as *vzjat'*.

The meaning of the *vzjat'*-construction is an abstraction from the different occurrences of the construction. As such, it is an abstraction over the different tenses or moods of the verbs that occur in the construction. This means that an occurrence of the *vzjat'*-construction in the narrative imperative mood must be analyzed as a combination of the abstract meaning of the *vzjat'*-construction, and the meaning of the narrative imperative. As such, my analysis differs from analyses that treat the narrative imperative as a special instance of the *vzjat'*-construction (such as Isachenko, 1960), or from analyses that make no distinction between narratives with or without *voz'mi* (e.g. Prokopovich, 1969).

Below, I will briefly discuss different semantic-syntactic features of the *vzjat'*-construction in some detail.

##### 3.4.5.1.1 Tense and mood

The verb *vzjat'* can occur in the present, subjunctive (past tense + *byl* infinitive + *by*), past tense, imperative or infinitive mood, and is conjuncted with a perfective verb in the same mood, tense and conjugation. Some examples are given below:

---

combination with the conjunctions *da, i, da i*, and a verb as an auxiliary to express a sudden or unexpected action.'). Although this description is adequate for the *vzjat'*-construction, it is not specific enough, because it also applies to the narrative imperative.

*The Russian imperative*

*Perfective present*

- (110) A čto, kak ja v samom dele voz'mu da zhenjus' na nej? (Vinogradov, 1947: 604/ Chernyshevskij)  
but what, how I indeed take-PERF-PRES-1SG and marry-PERF-PRES-1SG her  
'But what if I indeed *marry* her.'

*Past tense*

- (111) **vzjal i** neozhidanno **uexal** (*Russkaja Grammatika*, 1980, II: 222)  
he.took-PERF and suddenly he.went-PERF  
'he suddenly *went away*'

*Infinitive*

- (112) Oni tol' ko pishut prikazy, a kapitan vpolnjaj. Vot **vzjat' da i otkazat'sja**. (*Russkaja Grammatika*, 1980, II: 222)  
they just write orders, but captain perform-IMP-IMPERF. PRT take-INF-PERF and  
and refuse-INF-PERF  
'They just write orders, but the captain must perform them. Well, one *could just refuse*.'

*Infinitive + by*

- (113) Izvini, bratan, nu ne xotel ja tebjja obidet'. **Mne by vzjat' da i skazat'**, čto prav starina Zelenyj, tak net – kljunulo menja v zadnicu ne soglasit'sja.<sup>68</sup>  
sorry, brother, well not wanted I you insult. I-DAT IRR take-INF-PERF and say-INF-PERF that right fellow Zelenyj, so not – it.picked me in bottom not agree  
'Sorry, brother, but I didn't want to insult you. *I could/should have said* that this guy Zelenyj is right, but no, for some stupid reason, I just didn't agree with him.'

*Past tense + by*

- (114) I zhal' bylo svoego čuvstva ... tak zhal', čto kazhetsja, **vzjal by i zarydal**. (Chexov, *Ionych*)  
and sorry was for.his.own feelings ... so sorry, that seems, took IRR and cried  
'He felt so sorry for himself, so sorry, that it seemed *he could burst out into tears*.'

---

<sup>68</sup> <http://alisa.ru/ArmyAlisa/ArmyAlisa7.htm>

Note that the imperative mood can be narrative or directive, which can be shown by the absence or presence of the suffix *-te* in the case of the second person plural (see (105) above, that can be seen as a narrative case). Below, an example is given of a directive imperative case:

- (115) Esli vy svjato ubezhdeny, chto Fedor Ivanovich Shaljapin nikak ne predstavljen ni v russkoj, ni v mirovoj Seti – ne nado iskat' strelochnika i stavit' diagnoz. Prosto voz'mite da i sozdajte ego stranicu.<sup>69</sup>  
if you holy convinced, that Fedor Ivanovich Shaljapin in.no.way not portrayed not in Russian nor in world site, not need-ADV search scapegoat and make diagnosis. just take-IMP-PERF-2PL and and create-IMP-PERF-2PL his page  
'If you are totally convinced that Fedor Ivanovich Shaljapin is not portrayed on a site in Russian or somewhere else in the world, you should not look for a scapegoat and make your diagnosis. Just *make him* a page yourself.'

In the case of the second person singular, directive imperative use may occur without an expressed subject:

- (116) Mne nado sxodit' v magazin: "Tak voz'mi i sxodi".  
I-DAT need go to shop: so take-IMP and go-IMP  
'I have to go to the shop: "Then go."'

In some exceptional cases the mood of the verb *vzjat'* and the conjuncted verb are not identical, e.g.:

- (117) Podumal ja: chto mne zlit'sja? Vzjal i pishu: "Syn!.." (Uspenskij, *Idillija*)  
thought I: what I-DAT be.angry? took and write-IMPERF-PRES-1SG: "Son!.."  
'I thought: why should I make myself angry? I *just started to write down* : "Son!.."'

In this case the past tense form is conjuncted with a historical present in the imperfective aspect. This switching of tense is a typical trait of narrative discourse in Russian.<sup>70</sup>

---

<sup>69</sup> <http://www.cityline.ru:8084/vi/14sep1997.htm>

<sup>70</sup> It may also be argued that *vzjal* indicates that the decision has been taken, and *pishu* indicates the result of it, that is, the action in its progress.

### 3.4.5.1.2 Subject

The verb *vzjat'* can occur with a nominative pronoun or noun if the verb occurs in the present or past tense, or in the imperative mood. The participant expressed in the nominative is the subject of the action expressed by *vzjat'*, and the action expressed by the verb with which *vzjat'* is conjuncted. The *vzjat'*-construction can occur with all subjects; I have not, however, attested examples with a third person plural. The *vzjat'*-construction can also occur without expressed subject; in such cases the identity of the subject can be inferred from the context, e.g.:

- (118) Menja prigovorili k rasstrelu, a zatem nachali pochemu-to doprashivat'. Ja prigotovilsja umeret' s dostoinstvom, a tut menja **voz'mi da i nachni** izbivat' bil'jardnym kiem.<sup>71</sup>  
(...), but here me take-IMP-PERF and and start-IMP-PERF hit with.billiard cue  
'They sentenced me to death by shooting, but after that they started to interrogate me. I prepared to die with dignity, but *suddenly they started to hit* me with a billiard cue.'

In this sentence the agent of the action expressed by the verb is the people given in the context ('they').

On the basis of the meaning of the construction (see 3.4.5.2), one would not expect instances of the construction with impersonal verbs; the only example I have attested is given by Karcevski, who gives the following example with an impersonal verb in the imperative mood:

- (119) Tol'ko bylo cveti raspustilis', kak vdruk **voz'mi da primoroz'**.(Karcevski, 1927: 140)  
just PRT flowers opened, how suddenly take-IMP-PERF and freeze-IMP-PERF  
'The flowers had just opened, when suddenly *it started to freeze*.'

I have not seen examples with impersonal verbs and a dative, which may be connected with the fact that the action must be volitionally performed by the agent, or presented as such. Note that this contrasts with the narrative imperative, where we find impersonal sentences with a dative.

---

<sup>71</sup> <http://www.anekdot.ru:8084/d43.html>

### 3.4.5.1.3 Syntactic function

In most cases the verb *vzjat'* and the verb with which it is conjuncted can be seen as the head or predicate of the sentence. If the verb occurs in the infinitive mood, the [*vzjat'* conjunction V] constituent does not occur as the head of the sentence, but as the topic of the sentence.

### 3.4.5.1.4 Word order

The normal order of the construction is [*vzjat'* conjunction V], but other orders or configurations occur as well:

take-argument V (=object)-and-V:

- (120) Gad ty, i bol'she nikto. **Vzjala by** tebja i **ubila**. (Lubensky, 1995/ Vamilov)  
 creep you, and more nothing. took-FEM IRR you-ACC and killed-FEM  
 'You're a creep, that's all. *I could kill* you.'

take-and-argument V(=object)-V:

- (121) No sej mudryj izograf/ .../ **vzjal i** sovsem inoe **napisal**. (Leskov, *Zapechatlennyj angel*)  
 but that wise icon-painter / .../ took and entirely other painted  
 'But that wise icon-painter/ .../ *just painted* something totally different.'

take-and-argument V(=indirect object, instrument, object)-V:

- (122) [O]na kakuju zhe shtuku pridumala, **vzjala da** muzhu varen'em i lico i borodu **vymazala**. (Ostrovskij, *Staryj Drug L. Dv.*)  
 she which PRT joke thought.out, took and husband with.jam and face and beard smeared  
 'She thought out this joke, she *made* the beard and the face of her husband dirty with jam.'

An example with a [V conjunction *vzjat'*] order:

- (123) "... kakoj vy otec? ... **Udavljus'** vot **voz'mu!**" (*Russkaja Grammatika*, 1980, II: 220/ Uspenskij)

“... what you father? ... strangle.myself-PERF-PRES-1SG PRT take-PERF-PRES-1SG  
“... What kind of father are you? ... I *will strangle myself*.””

Note that with reverse order no conjunction is expressed. In some exceptional cases with the normal order we also find no conjunction (*da*, *i*, or *da i*) expressed:

- (124) Ruchkoj-to svojeju, znaete, vzjali obnjali, a zdes'... (Shvedova., 1955: 296/ Leskov)  
with.hand PRT, his, you.know, took embraced, but here...  
'With his hand, you know, he [the tsar] *suddenly embraced me*, and then ...'

### 3.4.5.2 Meaning of the *vzjat'*-construction

In the literature the meaning of the *vzjat'*-construction is discussed by various authors, such as Shvedova (1955), Isachenko (1960), Coseriu (1966), and Ekberg (1993). Shvedova (1955: 295) gives the following description for the meaning of the *vzjat'*-construction in Russian: “The decision to realize the action is in no way encumbered, often the action has a nuance of ‘arbitrariness, entirely caused by the personal whim of the subject.’”<sup>72</sup> In her analysis Shvedova (1955: 296) emphasizes that the construction has two different basic interpretations. In some cases the construction expresses an action that is easily fulfilled in the absence of any obstacles or barriers; in other cases, however, the construction expresses an arbitrary and undesirable action; in such cases the feature of easiness of the realization of the action is absent. Shvedova (1955) does not discuss how these interpretations are related to the meaning of the construction, and the context in which the construction occurs.

Isachenko (1960: 501) gives an analysis of the *vzjat'*-construction in terms of the meaning of the component *vzjat'*. He argues that the meaning of the verb *vzjat'* in the V-construction can be seen as identical to ‘vzdumat’ , roughly translatable into English as ‘to take it into one’s head’. This means that *vzjat'* expresses that the action can be seen as volitional, but at the same time as non-premeditated, as something that is not the result of planning by the agent.

Both Shvedova (1955) and Isachenko emphasize that the subject agrees with the realization of the action, but that the action is not planned, and that the realization is unexpected. Problematic in such a description is that the *vzjat'*-construction also occurs

---

<sup>72</sup> “Dejstvie kak nichem ne zatrudnennoe osushchestvlenie prinjatogo reshenija, chasto – s ottenkom ‘proizvol'nogo dejstvija , vsecelo obuslovlennogo lichnoj prixot'ju sub"ekta'.”

in the case of actions where the will of the subject plays no part at all. This is the case for example in sentences with the verb *umeret'* ('die') and the narrative mood:

- (125) Lekarja nashli, zastavili xorogo voina celit', a voin tot voz'mi da i pomri, nevziraja ni na kakoe celenie.<sup>73</sup> (Elena Xaekaja, *Obretenie enkidu*)  
 physician found, forced ill soldier heal, but soldier that take-IMP-PERF and and die-IMP-PERF not.looking no on what healing  
 'They found the physician, and gave an order to heal the soldier, but the soldier *just died*, notwithstanding whatever healing.'

In this case the action is non-premeditated, unexpected *and* non-volitional. Nevertheless, it may be argued that in this case the action is presented *as if* it is the result of a whim or caprice of the subject. If some action has a whim-like character, it will be unexpected, and if some action is unexpected, a whim-like character is attributed to the action. In the sentence above this means that the speaker acts as if he holds the subject responsible for the realization of the action. As such, the description given by Shvedova (1955) and Isachenko (1960) also applies in these cases.

I suspect that the presence or absence of the volitional character of the action is related to the context in which the construction occurs, and more specifically to the mood or tense of the verbs in the construction, and the person of the subject. It may be that the volitional character is most clearly expressed in sentences that do not refer to past events, such as the following with a directive imperative:

- (126) Komu chto interesno – Voz'mi da kupi. (Advertisement, Internet)  
 who-DAT what interesting, take-IMP-PERF and buy-IMP-PERF  
 'For everyone who is interested: *Just buy it.*'

In this sentence the *vzjat'*-construction is used to eliminate the addressee's possible hesitation to do the action. In narrative style sentences with a third person, the emphasis does not have to be on the whim-like character of the action, but can also be on the unexpected and sudden nature of the action:

- (127) No sej mudryj izograf/ .../ vzjal i sovsem inoe napisal (Leskov, *Zapechatlennyj angel*)  
 but that wise icon-painter / .../ took and entirely other painted  
 'But that wise icon-painter/ .../ *just painted* something totally different.'

---

<sup>73</sup> <http://www.kuzbass.ru/moshkow/lat/HAECKAQ/enkidu.txt>

Although there seems to be some plausibility to Isachenko's (1960) idea that the verb *vzjat'* can be defined as expressing something like 'vzdumat', it remains unclear how this meaning is related to the meaning of the construction as a whole. Another question that is not addressed by Isachenko is how the basic meaning of the verb *vzjat'* is related to the meaning that it has in the *vzjat'*-construction. To find an answer to these questions one has to look outside of the Russian linguistic literature, namely to the analyses of Coseriu (1966) and Ekberg (1993).

Coseriu (1966: 13–55) compares different analyses of paratactic constructions with the verb 'to take' and another verb in different European languages (Greek, Spanish, Russian, Italian dialects, Albanian, Danish, Finnish and others). Coseriu draws the following conclusions for this construction. The construction must be seen as a grammatical unit, where the verb 'take' has no predicative function of its own. The meaning of the construction can be defined as the expression of "the unity and indivisibility of the action" (1966: 42). Other shades of meaning (unexpectedness, suddenness, arbitrariness, etc.) must be seen as interpretations, that is, they occur as the result of the context in which the construction occurs (especially the meaning of the verb in the construction). Coseriu argues that there is no synchronical relation between the auxiliary 'take' in the construction and the basic meaning of *take*. According to him, the construction is so 'peculiar' that it is not possible it has developed independently in the different languages; the occurrence of the construction must probably be seen as the influence of Greek (1966: 44–55).

Coseriu's analysis is the starting point for that of Ekberg (1993). Ekberg gives an analysis of paratactic constructions with *take* as they can be found in different languages such as Swedish, some variants of English, Spanish, Polish, etc. from a cognitive semantics framework. There are two main differences between the analyses of Ekberg and Coseriu. Firstly, Ekberg argues that the *take*-construction cannot purely be seen as a grammatical unit. She says that at the level of event structure the *take*-construction has a complex or split representation, as the construction refers to both the initiation and the boundedness of the event expressed by the verb with which the verb *take* is conjuncted. Secondly, the verb *take* is not purely grammatical, but rather lexico-grammatical. According to Ekberg, the meaning of the construction can be related to the basic meaning of *take*. The relation between the basic meaning of the verb *take*, and the meaning of *take* in the *take*-construction can be explained as follows.

The verb *take* designates a complex event, consisting of the subcomponents 'Initiation', 'Transfer', and 'Possession'. The first image-schematic component corresponds to the initiation of the overall event. As this event is volitional and

inceptively momentaneous, the initiation component is distinguished by two properties, viz. [+Volitional] and [+Momentaneous]. *Take* does not focus on the entire image-schematic structure in the *take*-construction. Only the properties of the first subcomponent, Initiation, are explicitly kept in the *take*-construction. This means that there are two main properties that characterize the *take*-construction and oppositional forms, viz. (a) the marking of the initiation of the event expressed by the second verb, and (b) the marking of the volitionality of this event.

Although Ekberg mainly focusses on the semantic-syntactic properties of the *take*-construction in Swedish, she claims that the analysis is appropriate for the *take*-construction in all the different languages she discusses. According to Ekberg this cross-linguistic claim is sustained by the remarks of Bybee & Pagliuca (1985: 75) that metaphorical extensions are “cognitively based, and are similar across languages”.

Ekberg’s analysis gives us some interesting insights into the construction, but precisely the claim that the analysis is valid cross-linguistically, is one of the weak points of the analysis.<sup>74</sup> Ekberg sometimes refers to the construction in other languages to prove her point for Swedish, but fails to do this when Swedish differs from these languages. As a description of the Russian *vzjat*<sup>2</sup>-construction, the analysis is therefore not fully appropriate. To give an example: in Russian, the *vzjat*<sup>2</sup>-construction is compatible with the goal-oriented verb meaning ‘come’ (*vzjal da prisbel, voz’mi da pridj*), in contrast to Swedish (Ekberg, 1993: 29). In Russian the *vzjat*<sup>2</sup>-construction can occur with non-volitional actions, e.g. *voz’mi da i umri*, in contrast to Swedish (Ekberg, 1993: 33) (although such cases have a ‘ironic’ nature). Generally, it seems that in Swedish the *take*-construction is used to indicate the initiation of a volitional and momentaneous action (with additional shades of ‘mental contact with the subject of the action’, cf. Ekberg, 39), whereas in Russian the construction more strongly emphasizes the idea of arbitrariness and unmotivatedness of the action.<sup>75</sup>

Nevertheless, I think we can use Ekberg’s type of analysis to capture the meaning of the Russian *vzjat*<sup>2</sup>-construction. It seems to me that the same basic event (a basic ‘take’ event) can be extended in different ways in different languages, giving rise to similar but

---

<sup>74</sup> In my opinion, this is often a problem of analyses that try to define the meaning of specific forms in language in terms of more general basic cognitive structures.

<sup>75</sup> Most examples that are given for Swedish cannot be paraphrased in Russian with the *vzjat*<sup>2</sup>-construction. To give an example. The sentence *Han tog och läste en bok, när det började regna*. (Ekberg, 1993: 28), is translated in English with ‘He started to read a book, when it started to rain’. If I understand the example correctly, the idea of unexpectedness, inappropriateness, or unmotivatedness, which we find in the case of the Russian construction, is not present in this sentence.

not identical use of comparable constructions in different languages. We can motivate the idea of ‘arbitrariness’ if we relate the specific relation between the subject and the object present in the basic meaning of ‘take’, to the *vzjat*’-construction. In the case of the basic meaning of ‘take’ there is an agent that performs an action to get something in his possession. This means that the subject can be seen as an agent, whereas the object must be seen as a patient. In the case of the *vzjat*’-construction, the agent and the patient can be seen as two manifestations of the same entity, that is the entity expressed by the subject. The action can be seen as a volitional action by the agent, that is the subject is an agent, but at the same time the action is not the result of a process of preplanning or premediation. We conceptualize the moment when the agent feels the urge to *perform* an action that breaks the expected flow of events, or to put it more crudely, we conceptualize the scene as if the agent ‘takes himself’ to do an action.

Now, let us go back to the initial question of this section, namely, what is the difference in meaning between the *vzjat*’-construction and the narrative imperative? Prokopovich, in his analysis of the imperative mood, discusses the *vzjat*’-construction with imperative mood. He gives the following description (originally from Vinogradov) for the *vzjat*’-construction with *voz’mi*: “So, very characteristic is the feature, close to the voluntative [i.e. narrative imperative] mood, viz. the modal nuance of the arbitrariness of the action, entirely caused by the personal ‘whim’ of the subject, his arbitrary will” (1969: 59).<sup>76</sup> According to Prokopovich, the narrative imperative has the same meaning as the *vzjat*’-construction, but the character of unmotivatedness (*proizvol’nost’*) is less articulated in the former case than in the latter. Prokopovich does not discuss the difference in meaning between the narrative imperative and the *vzjat*’-construction with other moods than the imperative.

In the case of the narrative imperative the action is conceptualized as if *it is the result of some non-agent force*. As I argued earlier, the action is conceptualized in its dynamic realization (→ SIT(V)). This feature accounts for the absence of tense in the case of the narrative. The feature of dynamic realization is absent from the meaning of the *vzjat*’-construction, although it can be added to the meaning of the construction if the verb *vzjat*’ and the main verb with which it is conjoined occur in the narrative mood. Because

---

<sup>76</sup> “Tak, ochen’ xarakteren blizkij k voluntjativnomu nakloneniju modal’nyj ottenok proizvol’nogo dejstvia, vsecelo obuslovlennogo lichnoj ‘prixot’ju’ sub’ekta, ego proizvolom.”

the *vzjat'*-construction does not express the idea of dynamic realization, it can occur in non-narrative moods, such as the infinitive.<sup>77</sup>

In the case of the *vzjat'*-construction the idea of suddenness and unexpectedness arises because the subject of the action is conceptualized both as the agent and as the patient of the action. This construal hinges on the specific meaning of the verb *vzjat'* in the construction. That a meaning can be attributed to *vzjat'* is made clear in the following example, where the verb *vzjat'* is placed between parentheses:

- (128) Ne znaju, chem ja zasluzhil doverennost' moego novogo prijatelja, – tol'ko on, ni s togo, ni s sego, kak govoritjsa, 'vzjal' da i rasskazal mne dovol'no zamechatel'nyj sluchaj ... (Prokopovich, 1969: 60/ Turgenev)  
 not I.know, through.what I.deserved trust of.my new friend, just he, not of that not of this, as one says, 'took' and told me rather remarkable story  
 'I don't know how I deserved my new friend's trust, but all of a sudden, as one says, he just *told* [lit. took and told] me a rather remarkable story.'

In my opinion, the *vzjat'*-construction expresses that the subject of the action volitionally and intentionally performs an action, which the speaker takes to be unexpected for the hearer. As such, the speaker attributes the idea of 'vzdumat' ('take it into one's head') to the subject of the action. This does not mean, however, that the subject himself is necessarily overwhelmed by the action. This can be elucidated with the following sentence, where the subject can be identified with the speaker:

- (129) Dama ot ètogo otkazyvalas', govorja: 'net, net, menja ne budet doma!' – A Stepa uporno nastaival na svoem: 'a ja vot voz'mu da i pridu!' (Bulgakov, *Master i Margerita*)  
 lady from that refused, saying, "no, no, I not will.be at home!" but Stepa stubbornly was.holding his ground: but I here take and and will.come  
 'The lady was refusing this, saying, "no, no, I won't be home!" But Stepa was stubbornly holding his ground: "I *just will make sure to come!*"'

In this sentence the speaker uses the *vzjat'*-construction to indicate that he will engage in an action that is not expected of him, and not to indicate that he himself is overwhelmed by the action.

---

<sup>77</sup> It may be that the narrative imperative is more easily used in impersonal sentences than the *vzjat'*-construction. In any case, I have seen just one example of an impersonal *vzjat'*-construction. Impersonal sentences, however, occur with the narrative imperative without *vzjat'*.

I think that the differences between the *vzjat'*-construction and the narrative imperative are also connected with the fact that in the case of the *vzjat'*-construction the idea of unexpectedness can be attributed to a specific lexeme, viz. *vzjat'*. Because of this, the idea of 'vzdumat'' and the idea of 'engaging in an activity' or 'initiation of an action' are more clearly expressed in the case of the *vzjat'*-construction than in the case of the narrative imperative. In those cases where the *vzjat'*-construction occurs with the narrative imperative we find both the so-called dynamic conceptualization and the meaning expressed by *vzjat'*; such cases are the most expressive and vivid. In those case where we find the *vzjat'*-construction without the narrative, we do not have the feature of dynamic realization; furthermore, it may be that in such sentences the idea of 'being overwhelmed' by the action is absent, and that, instead, the volitional character of the action is stressed.<sup>78</sup>

#### **3.4.6 Conclusion**

The narrative imperative can be defined as follows: unexpected dynamic realization of the imperative situation. The narrative can be analyzed as a special extension of the necessitive or directive imperative where the idea of an impulse is cancelled, or at least extremely reduced. The narrative shares with the other imperative uses, that the imperative situation breaks the expected course of events. In the case of the other imperative uses this must be seen as a presupposition, whereas in the case of the narrative, this feature is selected as the meaning of the narrative. It may be argued that in the case of the narrative the idea of an impulse is partly preserved in the idea of 'fate'. Under this analysis the imperative situation is conceptualized as if there is some non-specifiable force, call it 'fate', that contributes to the realization of the imperative situation.

---

<sup>78</sup>Finally, it must be remarked that in modern Russian the narrative imperative seems to be restricted to special styles, and discourse types, whereas the use of the *vzjat'*-construction is less restricted. As such the two constructions cannot be seen as purely oppositional forms, but must be seen as similar uses that occur in different domains of the language register.

### 3.5 Optative use of the imperative

#### 3.5.1 Introduction

In this section I will give a description of the optative use of the imperative form (henceforth: optative imperative). The optative imperative can be seen as an instantiation of the *basic* meaning of the imperative, viz. the directive-hortative meaning. The basic status of the optative imperative is underlined by diachronic data, rather than by synchronic data. Diachronic data suggest that in older stages of the Slavic languages (for example in Church-Slavonic and in Old-Russian), the imperative form was used as an optative, conjunctive or hortative (Sobolevskij, 1962 [1907]; Issatchenko, 1983: 377). Issatschenko (1983: 377) argues that the Slavic imperative originates from an Indo-European optative with the feature \*-oi-. Although the current imperative form probably derived from a form whose basic function was to express optativeness, in nineteenth-century and twentieth-century Russian, the optative imperative use occurs almost exclusively in petrified expressions, and is no longer a productive use of the imperative anymore. Nevertheless, I will briefly discuss this imperative use here. This discussion is relevant because I will argue in 3.6 that the conditional use of the imperative (with first and third persons) can be analyzed as an extended use of the optative imperative.

#### 3.5.2 The meaning of the optative imperative

The following sentences, the first two both from the nineteenth century, and the third from the twentieth century, are examples of optative imperatives:

- (130) **Nagradi** vas gospod' za vashu dobrodetel'. (A.Pushkin, *Kapitanskaja doch'*)  
reward-IMP-PERF you-ACC god-NOM for your goodness  
'May God reward you for your goodness.'
- (131) **Sgin'** ona! (N. Leskov, *Ledi Makbet Mcenckogo uezda*)  
die-IMP-PERF she-NOM  
'May she die!'
- (132) Nu, ja pljunul i govorju: davaj po rukam, **bud'** chto budet.<sup>79</sup> (V. Belov, *Privychnoe delo*)  
well, I spat and say: let's over hands, be-IMP what will.be

---

<sup>79</sup> <http://lib.ru/lat/PROZA/BELOW/delo.txt>

‘Well, I spat and said: “Let’s make a deal, come what may.”’

This use of the imperative is called *optative*, because the imperative is used to express the wish or desire of the speaker that the imperative action will be realized. In contrast to the basic directive use of the imperative as discussed in 3.2, which only occurs with second persons, the optative imperative occurs with first, second, and third persons.

Before discussing the optative use in more detail, I will give a description of the meaning of the optative imperative:

**The speaker intends to contribute to the realization of the imperative situation (by the participant expressed in the nominative if the verb is personal) by giving an impulse to the addressee or some other non-specified force, to contribute to this realization**

The meaning-frame shown in Figure 3.15 can be used for the optative imperative.

Figure 3.15

| Force   | Goal                                       | Subject of situation           | Object of force                |
|---------|--|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Speaker | → SIT(V <sub>+aspect</sub> )t <sub>1</sub> | S= 1/ 2/ 3sg-pl/<br>impersonal | Addressee, non-specified force |

The meaning of the optative imperative given above presupposes that:

- (i) if the hearer cannot contribute to the realization of the situation by the subject, some supernatural force is presupposed for helping to bring about the situation<sup>80</sup>
- (ii) at < t<sub>1</sub> not V, or there is some intention of the subject to do not V
- (iii) the speaker commits himself to wanting the realization of the imperative situation

In the case of the optative imperative the speaker hopes to contribute to the realization of the imperative situation by uttering the imperative. Therefore a sentence like the following is not possible:

(133) ?Provalis’ ona, no ja znaju chto èto nevozmozhno.

<sup>80</sup> An example where the hearer can contribute to the realization of the situation can be found in (136) below.

get.lost-IMP-PERF she-NOM, but I know that is impossible  
 'May she disappear, but I know it is not possible.'

In the case of the optative imperative the speaker cannot influence the realization of the imperative situation directly by manipulating the agent of the situation, but he intends to contribute to this realization by uttering the imperative because he directs the addressee or some non-specified force to contribute to the realization of the imperative situation. As such, the optative imperative can be said to have a *bortative* function.

The non-specified force can often be identified with a supernatural force like a saint, the lord, god or satan. This supernatural force is often mentioned in the sentence, and is sometimes expressed in the vocative form, such as in *Bozže saxrani* ('Oh God, protect'). Consequently, Veyrenc calls this imperative the 'injonction à l'extrapersonnel'. According to Veyrenc *all* optative imperative cases have this extrapersonal character. Veyrenc states that:

"Le sujet apparent, qui peut être alors de genre inanimée (...), n'est que le réflexe superficiel d'un objet profond. C'est en réalité une entité surnaturelle non désignée qui est implicitement chargée de l'accomplissement éventuel de l'action néfaste." (Veyrenc, 1980: 102)

He sees evidence for this in the occurrence of sentences with a passive form:

- (134) **Bud'** ja prokljat.  
 be-IMP I-NOM cursed  
 'May I be cursed.'

In this case the passive form of the verb may indicate that "[l]'opérateur de la malédiction est extérieur à la personne prise pour sujet de ce passif" (Veyrenc, 1980: 101). Other evidence for the 'supernatural' character of the optative imperative is the fact that there are very few sentences in modern Russian where the performer is not expressed as a supernatural force, and they always occur with a special kind of act (like 'provalit'sja' which can be seen as indirectly performable by a supernatural force. Thus in *modern* Russian we do not find sentences like:

- (135) **?Pročitaj** on ètu knigu.  
 read-IMP-PERF he that book  
 'May he read the book.'

It may be argued that the optative imperative occurs only with a very specific type of actions, namely those actions that can be seen as (indirectly) performable by a supernatural force, which are typically actions that cannot be controlled by the subject. Such cases occur mostly in petrified expressions where the supernatural force is mentioned or implied. Note that this is not the case with *pust'*, the lexical element expressing optativeness; *pust'* can be seen as the natural way to express optativeness in modern Russian.

Although in modern Russian all optative imperative cases seem to have a supernatural character, this character does not appear to be a necessary feature of this use in earlier stages of Russian. Vinogradov & Shvedova (1964: 224–226) discuss the optative imperative in the nineteenth century and claim that in the second half of the eighteenth century, the optative imperative was used in both literary style and colloquial style. Until the 1850s the optative imperative was freely used, whereas in the second half of the nineteenth century the optative imperative disappears from the high style literature, but its place is taken by *pust' / puskaj*<sup>81</sup>; in the second half of the nineteenth century the use of the optative imperative is preserved only in texts with a colloquial style. Vinogradov & Shvedova (1964) do not discuss the difference in meaning between the optative imperative and the *pust'* construction, but the examples they give do not all have a clear supernatural character. Take for example the following extract from a letter, written in the nineteenth century (1826):

- (136) Blagodarju miluju Mashen'ku ... i nezhno celuju; **pereceluj** ona takzhe za menja sestric i Pavlushu. (Vinogradov & Shvedova, 1964: 225/ Vjazemskij)  
I thank dear Masha ... and tenderly I kiss; kiss-IMP-PERF she-NOM also for me sisters and little Pavel  
'I thank dear Masha and kiss her gently; let her also kiss in my name the sisters and little Pavel.'

In this sentence the speaker directs the reader of the letter to make the subject of the imperative realize this action; the imperative action can be controlled by the subject. The occurrence of sentences like this suggests that the optative imperative was originally used to address both supernatural forces or the addressee present in the speaker-hearer context (as is the case with *pust'*), but that this use declined, probably owing to the influence of

---

<sup>81</sup> Vinogradov & Shvedova (1964) give the following sentence where *puskaj* co-occurs with the optative imperative: *Kto xochet, tot puskaj **serdis'**, Nad nashej shalost'ju ostris'*. (Vinogradov & Shvedova, 1964: 224/ Griboedov)

*past'*, in the middle of the nineteenth century. Nowadays, the imperative only occurs in set expressions where a supernatural force is mentioned or implied, and with the verb *byt'*.

### 3.5.3 Semantic-syntactic features

The following semantic-syntactic features are relevant for the optative imperative:

- (i) –tense
- (ii) +aspect (perfective, imperfective)
- (iii) +subject
- (iv) prototypically VS order
- (v) no suffix *-te*
- (vi) suffix *-ka*
- (vii) in some cases expression of particle *by*
- (viii) idiomaticity

Below I will briefly discuss some of these features; for the feature tense I refer to 3.1.

#### 3.5.3.1 Aspect

The optative imperative occurs in both the perfective and the imperfective aspect. By using the perfective aspect, the speaker indicates that he wishes the subject to reach the natural or imposed end point of the imperative action, because of the desirable consequences of this realization. In the case of the imperfective aspect, the action qua action is seen as desirable, e.g.:

- (137) Net, **delaj** on to chto mne poleznjaj. (Vinogradov & Shvedova, 1964: 224/ Sumarok)  
no, do-IMP-IMPERF he-NOM that what me more useful  
'No, may he do what is more useful for me.'

#### 3.5.3.2 Subject

The optative imperative occurs with all persons in the nominative, and with impersonal verbs:

- (138) **Bud'** by zdes' tixo! (*Russkaja Grammatika*, 1980, II: 106 )  
be-IMP IRR here quiet

'If only it would be quiet here.'

- (139) Poskol'ku bol'shinstvo kul'turnyx proektov segodnja rukovodstvujutsja lozungom "Dozhit' do rassveta!", to izdanie, vidimo, gotovilos' po principu "Vvjazhemsja v draku, a tam xot' ne rassvetaj."<sup>82</sup>  
in.so.far.as majority of.cultural projects today are.being.managed with.motto "live till dawn!", then edition, obviously, was.prepared according.to principle "let's.throw.ourselves in fight, but there PRT not dawn-IMP-IMP"  
'In so far as the majority of the cultural projects today are managed according to the motto "Live till dawn!", this edition was obviously prepared according to the principle "Let's start fighting, and let it remain dark there."' (meaning: 'let's get on with the job, the rest is not important')

The optative imperative can occur with non-animate subjects:

- (140) Esli ty goloden i nag/ **Bud'** tebe utexoj uchebnyj shag.<sup>83</sup> (K. Pruktov, *Army aphorisms*)  
if you hungry and naked/ be-IMP you-DAT consolation-INSTR training step-NOM  
'If you are hungry and naked/ May the drill-training be like a consolation to you.'

The nominative pronoun or noun can be seen as the subject of the imperative predicate. In the case of a second person singular there is no clear distinction between the directive use and the optative use. Veyrenc (1980: 101) gives the following example of a second person optative with the verb *provalit'sja* ('to get lost'):

- (141) **Provalis'** ty. (Veyrenc, 1980: 101)  
get.lost-IMP-PERF you  
'Get lost.'

The verb *provalit'sja* is a typical optative lexical verb (it is a situation that cannot be controlled by the subject, but which could be influenced by some supernatural force), and the VS order is typical of the optative imperative; nevertheless, there are no clear criteria for deciding whether it is an optative case or a directive case. Note, however, that in the case of the second person plural, the suffix *-te* is sometimes attached to the verb, whereas in other cases it is not:

---

<sup>82</sup> <http://www.russ.ru:8085/krug/kniga/99-07-06/knyazev.htm>; I have attested several instances of the expression *a tam xot' ne rassvetaj*, which suggests that it is idiomatic, at least to some degree.

<sup>83</sup> [http://www.litera.ru:8085/stixiya/authors/appendix/prutkov\\_voennoe.html](http://www.litera.ru:8085/stixiya/authors/appendix/prutkov_voennoe.html)

- (142) Da **provalis'** vy vmeste s vashej antennoj (...).<sup>84</sup> (N. Ognev, *Krushenie Antenny*)  
 yes get.lost-IMP-PERF you together with your antenna (...)  
 'Get lost together with your antenna.'
- (143) Da **provalites'** vy skvoz' zemlju.<sup>85</sup> (K. Bulychev, *Predskazatel' proshlogo*)  
 yes disappear-IMP-PERF-2PL you through ground  
 'May you sink into the ground.'

I do not think that such cases have a different meaning. I think that second person cases must be seen as borderline cases between optative use and directive use. In the case of a second person singular, this 'ambiguity' may remain underspecified. In the case of the second person plural, however, where a choice has to be made between adding *-te* or not, both variants occur.

### 3.5.3.3 Word order

Optative sentences normally have a verb subject (VS) order. The imperative usually takes the first position in the clause, but in some cases other constituents (than the verb) may be expressed, for example:

- (144) Puskaj pogibnet svet, Lish' tol'ko mne syshchis' ljubeznaja sobaka. (Vinogradov & Shvedova, 1964: 224/ V. Majk.)  
 let die earth, just only I-DAT find-IMP-PERF favorite-NOM dog-NOM  
 'The earth may be destroyed, I only want to find my favorite dog.'

In most cases the verb and subject are not separated by other constituents, but exceptions occur:

- (145) **Bud'** ej teper' moja sud'bina! (Vinogradov & Shvedova, 1964: 225/ Borat.)  
 be-IMP she-INSTR my destiny  
 'May my destiny now be hers.'

The imperative verb is always accented. The last accent of the optative construction may be on the imperative predicate (e.g. *umRI ona*) or on another constituent, which may be the

<sup>84</sup> <http://www.magister.msk.ru:8085/library/prose/ognen003.htm>

<sup>85</sup> <http://www.moshkow.pp.ru:5000/lat/BULYCHEW/kora03.txt>

*The Russian imperative*

subject or another constituent (e.g. *BUD' by tishìNA; PereceLUJ ona takzhe za menja sestric i PavLUshu*). Deviance from the VS order rarely occurs. Below an example is given with an SV order:

- (146) Ego primer **bud'** nam naukoj. (Pushkin, *Evgenij Onegin*)  
his example be-IMP us science  
'May his example be like a lesson to us.'

The order here is possibly influenced by the poetic structure of the text.

The word order of the optative imperative is connected with the specific semantics of this use, and also occurs in the case of other optative use without optative conjunctions.

*Subjunctive optative*

- (147) Uexali by oni!  
went IRR they  
'If only they would go away!'

*Infinitive optative*

- (148) Zhit' vam do sta let!  
live-INF you-DAT to hundred years  
'May you live a hundred years.'

This suggests not only that the VS order is linked not only to the meaning of the imperative optative but, more generally, that it may be a natural order when the predicate is interpreted as expressing wish.

It may be that there are differences between moods in the extent to which word order is fixed. Bondarko (1990: 175) claims that in the case of the subjunctive with an optative meaning the SV order is possible:

- (149) Papasha, vy by govorili s Aleksandroj. (Bondarko/ Gor'kij)  
papa, you IRR spoke with Alexandra  
'Papa, if only you would talk to Alexandra.'

According to Bondarko, however, this order is never obligatory; sentences like this can *always* be rendered to a VSX order (*Papasha, govorili by vy s Aleksandroj*).<sup>86</sup> Shvedova (1967: 75), on the other hand, claims that another order than VS in the case of the subjunctive optative is “practically excluded”. She states that in the following sentence *Byl by u menja drug!* the verb obligatorily takes the first position in the clause. Unfortunately, neither Shvedova (1967) nor Bondarko (1990) discuss the difference in word order in terms of the information structure of the clause. The evidence that they provide, however, suggests that the *normal* order for optative is VS (X). The fixedness of the VS order suggests that an explanation of the word order cannot solely be based on the general pragmatic principles of word order (cf. Keijsper, 1985; Kompeer, 1992).

In my opinion the word order in the case of the optative imperative can possibly be motivated as follows:

*SV<sub>imp</sub> order*

The expression of the subject presupposes the existence of some action, the identity of which is given later.

*V<sub>imp</sub>S order*

The expression of the verb means that the existence of the action is introduced in a hypothetical mental space or world, and presupposes the existence of a subject, when the verbs is personal.

In the case of the sentences under discussion the VS arrangement is not connected to the theme status of V and the rheme status of some constituent following V. In the case of the optative the existence of the situation expressed by the verb is not given, but introduced in the discourse. In such sentences the verb expresses the information that is the ‘starting point’ for the rest of the information expressed in the clause. This may motivate its clause initial position; the subject in such sentences has the character of additional information. In the case of the optative imperative the starting point for the optative situation is the predicate: the speaker pictures to himself the presence of the optative situation expressed by the predicate. One might say that the position of the

---

<sup>86</sup> Bondarko claims that this sentence can be seen as an optative case because it can be paraphrased with *tot’ by*. Unfortunately, Bondarko does not discuss the difference between these sentences in terms of their information structure.

subject relative to the imperative verb gives information about the reality-hypotheticality status of the imperative action from the perspective of the speaker. This analysis of the VS order in the case of the optative imperative remains highly speculative. I will say more about the VS word order in 3.6.3.3, where I will discuss the VS order of the conditional.

#### 3.5.3.4 Presence of *-ka*

I have attested one example of a combination of the optative imperative and the suffix *-ka*:

- (150) **Razverni-ka** on im ètu knigu i **nachni** chitat' bez premudryx slov i bez xvanstva, bez voznošenija nad nimi, a umilennno i krotko, sam radujas' tomu, chto chitaesh' im i chto oni tebja slushajut i ponimajut tebja (...) <sup>87</sup> (F.M. Dostoevskij, *Brat'ja Karamazovy*)  
open-IMP-PERF-PRT he they-DAT that book and start-IMP-PERF read without wise words and without boasting, without elevation above them, but emotionally and gently, self enjoying that, that you.read them and that they you listen and understand you (...)  
'May he open the book for them and start to read without using difficult words and boasting, without placing himself above them, but read emotionally and gently, enjoying yourself that you read them and that they listen to you and understand you.'

This extract is from a nineteenth-century novel, and from the speech of a monk who uses language with archaic features. Nevertheless, the possibility of combining the optative imperative with *-ka* underlines that it can be seen as a hortative use.

#### 3.5.3.5 The particle *by*

The *Russkaja Grammatika* (1980, II: 106) notes that in modern Russian we find the optative imperative of the verb *byt'* in conjunction with the particle *by* (which indicates that the predicate to which it is applied does not occur in the real world but in a counterfactual world):

- (151) **Bud'** by zdes' tixo! (*Russkaja Grammatika*, 1980, II: 106 )  
be-IMP IRR here quiet  
'If only it were quiet here.'

- (152) **Bud'** by druž'ja rjadom. (ibid.)

---

<sup>87</sup> <http://www.magister.msk.ru:8085/library/dostoevs/karama06.htm>

be-IMP IRR friends-NOM close  
 'If only my friends were close.'

According to the *Russkaja Grammatika* (1980, II: 106), this use is typical of the spoken language.

There is possibly a tendency to use the particle *by* with other verbs as well, which seems to be stated by the *Russkaja Grammatika*: "It is possible to express wish by the imperative form together with the particle *by*; such sentences have a general personal meaning" (1980, II: 624).<sup>88</sup> The following examples, both from Bunin, are given by the *Russkaja Grammatika* (1980, II: 624):<sup>89</sup>

- (153) **Propadi** (by) vse propadom.  
 get.lost-IMP-PERF (IRR) all without.a.trace  
 'The hell with them.'
- (154) **Provalis'** (by) oni v tartarary.  
 disappear-IMP-PERF (IRR) they-NOM to hell  
 'Damn them.'

Below, another example is given:

- (155) Kakaja vse-taki zhizn'! – v odin mig vse srazu ruxnulo. Da i **propadi** by on propadom, ètot kozhan<sup>90</sup> (Vasilij Shukshin, *Moj zjat' ukral mashinu drov*)  
 which still life! in one moment all immediately it.collapsed. yes and dissappear IRR he without.a.trace, that leather.jacket  
 'What a life this is! In one moment everything has collapsed. Well, the hell with that leather jacket.'

The occurrence of optative imperative sentences with the particle *by* can possibly be seen as the modern implication of the 'supernatural optative'. In the case of the optative imperative as described above the speaker addresses a force that can contribute to the realization of the imperative action. The desirable situation conveyed by the imperative

---

<sup>88</sup> "Pobuzhdenie v soedinenii so znacheniem zhelatel'nosti vyrazhaetsja formoj povelit. nakl. v vozmozhnom sochetanii s chasticej *by*; takie predlozhenija imejut obobshchenno-lichnoe znachenie." (*Russkaja Grammatika*, 1980, II: 624)

<sup>89</sup> It is unclear to me whether *by* occurred in the original text.

<sup>90</sup> [http://www.moskcow.pp.ru:5000/lat/SHUKSHIN/my\\_zat.txt](http://www.moskcow.pp.ru:5000/lat/SHUKSHIN/my_zat.txt)

cannot be accomplished by the subject *because* it can only be accomplished by a supernatural force; in the case of the ‘modern optative’ the imperative indicates a desirable situation that can be accomplished *neither* by the subject (if there is any), *nor* by a supernatural force. Note that the particle *by* does not occur in optative cases where the supernatural force is mentioned. I have not attested sentences like:

- (156) \***Nagradi** by vas gospod’ za vashu dobrodetel’.  
reward-IMP-PERF IRR you-ACC the Lord for your goodness  
‘May the Lord reward you for your goodness.’

We could explain this by pointing at the fixedness of this expression. On the other hand, the particle *by* does occur in other set expressions, like in (154). These are all expressions where the supernatural force is not mentioned. It can be argued that with the disappearance of the idea of indirect appeal, the idea of the action being realizable is also lost; the speaker can no longer influence the realization of the action by some other force. It seems therefore that the occurrence of optative imperative sentences with *by* is connected with the disappearance of the supernatural character of the optative. The imperative no longer expresses the indirect appeal of the speaker toward supernatural forces or to some understood agent, and can be seen as more or less equivalent to subjunctive optative use:

- (157) Byli by druž’ja rjadom! (*Russkaja Grammatika*, 1980, II: 106)  
be-PAST-PL IRR friends-NOM close  
‘If only my friends were here!’
- (158) Da provalilos’ by vse k bezdnam kosmicheskim<sup>91</sup> (A. Legostaev, *Ljubov’ sil’nee mecha*)  
PRT disappear-PAST-PERF-NEUT IRR all to hellhole cosmic  
‘If only everything would disappear into that cosmic hellhole!’

In Russian the subjunctive can be used to express wish. The examples of optative subjunctives that I have seen often occur in a conditional structure. Unfortunately, the *Russkaja Grammatika* does not provide additional context for the optative imperative with *by* and *byt’*; it is not clear to me how and to what extent the optative imperative differs from the optative subjunctive.<sup>92</sup> The *Russkaja Grammatika* (1980, II: 106, 107, 108) also

---

<sup>91</sup> <http://www.magister.msk.ru:8085/library/sf/legoa003.htm>

<sup>92</sup> Here I should note that when I checked the use of the imperative optative with the particle *by*, I found that the respondents interpreted these sentences as the protasis of a conditional clause. A sentence like: *Bud’ by tishina*

mentions the possibility of using *pust' by* to express wish; this use can be paraphrased with modal constructions that express necessity like *sledovalo by*, *nužbno bylo by* ('should have'), indicating that it would have been/ be more appropriate to realize an alternative situation:

- (159) Trudnyj narod èti zhenshchiny! – on zasunul ruki v karmany i daleko vpered vytjanul nogi, – zachem, naprimer, menja poslali po ètomu delu? Pust' by ezdil Begemot, on obajatel'nyj ...<sup>93</sup> (M. Bulgakov, *Master i Margarita*)  
 (...) let IRR went Begemot, he charming ...  
 “What a difficult kind of people, those women!” – he put his hands in his pockets and fully stretched his legs in front of him, “Why, for example, did they send me to take care of this matter? Begemot should have gone, he’s charming ...”

In the case of the optative imperative with *by*, as it occurs in (155), the idea of ‘necessity of an appropriate alternative situation’ is absent.

### 3.5.3.6 Idiomaticity

As I mentioned above, in modern Russian the optative imperative occurs only in petrified expressions, mostly in expressions where reference is made to a supernatural phenomenon, and in expressions with the verb *byt'* such as *ne v obidul v upor! v uprekl v gnev bud' skazano* ('No offense is meant.').<sup>94</sup>

### 3.5.4 Conclusion

The imperative can be used to express optativeness with a hortative character. This use of the imperative is not productive in modern Russian but only occurs in more or less petrified expressions. In modern Russian the analytical form *pust'* is a more neutral way to express hortative-optativeness. The optative imperative can co-occur with the particle *by*;

---

(‘If only it was quiet’) was seen as a subordinate conditional clause without the main clause. This is comparable to the occurrence of optative sentences with *esli* (‘if’) like *O esli by ja mog ee uvidet!* (‘O if only I could see her.’). As I will discuss in the next section, in modern Russian the particle *by* can also be conjoined with the counterfactual conditional imperative use. This seems to be a nineteenth-century phenomenon. Note that optative imperative use with *by* already occurs in the second half of the nineteenth century in colloquial style: *Chto pjatdesjat' tysjach, uzh propadaj by oni.* (Vinogradov & Shvedova, 1964: 226/ Vel'tman)

<sup>93</sup> <http://lib.ru/lat/BULGAKOW/master.txt>

<sup>94</sup> Data of the verb *byt'* show that the restriction to more or less fixed expressions (*budi tebe izvestno/vedomo; bud' na tebe milost' boz'h'ja*, etc.) already occurred in the eighteenth century, and to a lesser extent in the seventeenth century.

the use of *by* possibly indicates that the 'hortative' feature of the optative is weakened in modern Russian. In the next section I will discuss the conditional imperative. I will argue that the conditional imperative can be seen as an extension of the optative imperative.

### 3.6 Conditional use of the imperative

#### 3.6.1 Introduction

In this section I will give an analysis of the conditional use of the imperative. I will argue that the conditional imperative can be seen as an extension of the optative imperative where the feature of 'wish' has been modified or weakened. In the case of the optative imperative the speaker hopes to contribute to the realization of the imperative action by uttering the imperative because he *wishes* the realization of the optative action in this world; in the case of the conditional imperative, the speaker wishes the hearer to *imagine* the realization of the imperative action, and describes in the following part of the sentence what the consequences of the hypothetical realization of the imperative action would be or could have been.

The section has the following structure. In 3.6.2 I will discuss the meaning of the conditional imperative. In 3.6.3 I will discuss some of the semantic-syntactic features of this use, in 3.6.4 I will discuss the relation between the conditional use and other imperative uses, and in 3.6.5 I will discuss the so-called 'subjective-modal' features of the conditional imperative use, which are absent in the case of oppositional forms.

#### 3.6.2 The meaning of the conditional imperative

The following sentences are examples of conditional imperatives:

- (160) **Razgoris'** atomnyj pozhar – i okazhutsja bessmyslennymi usilija ljudej dobroj voli.  
(Wade, 1992: 328)  
break.out-IMP-PERF atomic fire, and turn.out.to.be useless efforts of.people of.good will  
'If a nuclear war breaks out, the efforts of the people of good will will be useless.'
- (161) **Nachni** on vykladyvat' emu podobnye dovody, kak tot srazu zhe sprosit: "A zachem prinimaesh' uchastie v srazhenijax?"<sup>95</sup> (J. Nikitin, *Zolotaja shpagina*)

---

<sup>95</sup> <http://www.moshkow.pp.ru:5000/lat/NIKITINYU/gold.txt>

begin-IMP-PERF he-NOM motivate him such arguments, how that.one immediately PRT  
will.ask: “but why you.take part in battles?”

If he starts to motivate similar arguments to him, the other will immediately ask: “But why do you participate in such battles?”

- (162) **Pridi** ja poran'she, mozhet stojal by sejchas rjadyskom s infantil'nymi astronautami (...).<sup>96</sup> (S. Lukjanenko, *Teni snov*)  
come-IMP-PERF I-NOM somewhat.earlier, maybe stood IRR now besides with infantile astronauts (...)  
'Had I come just a little bit earlier, I might have stood here together with those infantile astronauts.'
- (163) A Simon i vovse poterjal oshchushchenie real'nosti, i pojavis' pered nim sam Satana sobstvennoj personoj, on by prinjal èto kak dolzhnoe i lish' vjalo perekrestilsja by, izgonjaja nechistogo proch'.<sup>97</sup> (O. Avramenko, *Princ Gallii*)  
but Simon and entirely lost feeling of.reality, and appear-IMP-PERF before him self Satan-NOM in.own person, he IRR took that how necessity and only limply made.the.sign of.the.cross, chasing the.evil.one away  
'But Simon had completely lost his feeling of reality, and if Satan himself in his own person would appear before him, he would take it as a necessity, and he would only limply make the sign of the cross, to chase the evil one away.'

In Russian the imperative can be used with all subjects, or with impersonal verbs, as the first constituent of a clause in a co-ordinate complex to express condition. Depending on the situation mentioned in the clause following or preceding the imperative clause, the conditional imperative may be interpreted as a case of *hypothetical* condition or *counterfactual* condition.<sup>98</sup>

Sentences (160) and (161) are examples of hypothetical conditional imperatives. In the case of a hypothetical conditional imperative, we find the indicative mood (perfective present) in the clause following or preceding the imperative clause. The term 'hypothetical' conditional is used to contrast this type of conditional with the 'counterfactual' conditional; in contrast to the latter, the construction with the hypothetical conditional

<sup>96</sup> <http://moshkov.perm.ru/lat/LUKXQN/tenisnov.txt>

<sup>97</sup> <http://www.kuzbass.ru/moshkov/lat/RUFANT/AWRAMENKO/prince2.txt>

<sup>98</sup> Dancygier & Sweetser (1996: 87) argue that the term 'counterfactual' is not correct for English sentences with *if* because of the occurrence of sentences like *If you got me a cup of coffee, I'd be very grateful*, where the realization of the action can still occur in this world. They therefore prefer to use the term 'negative epistemic stance'. For the Russian conditional imperative, however, the term 'counterfactual' suffices.

imperative expresses that the realization of the imperative situation is hypothetical. This means that the question whether in reality the imperative situation could be fulfilled is left open. As I will argue below in 3.6.5, in the case of the hypothetical imperative conditional, the imperative situation breaks the expected course of events, that is, it is a situation that the addressee is not likely to imagine, or a situation that the addressee is not likely to associate with leading to the situation mentioned in the protasis. The hypothetical status of the conditional imperative is therefore merely rhetorical. Hypothetical conditional imperative use can be paraphrased with a construction with *esli* ('if') + perfective present.

In the case of counterfactual conditional imperatives like (162) and (163), we find a subjunctive (past tense + *by*; infinitive mood + *by*) in the clause following or preceding the imperative clause. Such uses are called 'counterfactual' because the imperative situation is interpreted as a situation whose actual realization is seen as contrary to the facts. There are two possible interpretations of the counterfactual conditional, viz. (i) the imperative situation could have occurred in the past, but did not occur, or (ii) one could imagine the actual world being slightly different, such that the imperative situation would be the case. Put differently in terms of possible worlds, in a world close to the factual world, the imperative action would have occurred, as in (162), or could occur, as in (163), but in this world it did or does not. Sentences like these can be paraphrased with *esli* ('if') + *by* + past tense in the subordinate clause and a subjunctive (past tense + *by*) in the main clause, or with a subjunctive.<sup>99</sup> The close relation between the conditional counterfactual imperative and the subjunctive is underlined by the following sentence, where the imperative co-occurs with a subjunctive:

- (164) **Bud'** ja pomolozhe, i **pozvolila** by komplekcija, sam by polez, ej bogu! (A. Chexov, 1988)  
be-IMP I-NOM younger, and allowed IRR bodily.constitution, self IRR climb, PRT  
'Had I been younger, and had my bodily constitution allowed it, I would have climbed myself.'

Whether we are dealing with a hypothetical or a counterfactual conditional cannot be determined from the imperative form itself but only from the apodosis (whether it is in the indicative or the subjunctive). In some counterfactual cases, however, we find the particle *by* in the imperative clause. The following example is given in the *Russkaja Grammatika* (1980, II):

---

<sup>99</sup> Note that in this case the imperative is conjoined with a subjunctive mood.

- (165) **Bud'** by borovki, nastojashchie griby, stal by ja, staryj chelovek, naklonjat'sja za chernym gribom! (*Russkaja Grammatika*, II, 1980: 104/ Prishv.)  
 be-IMP IRR borovki-NOM, real mushrooms, begin IRR I, old man, bow for black mushroom  
 'If there were borovki [type of white mushrooms], real mushrooms, do you think that I, an old man, would start to pick black mushrooms?'

I will discuss such cases in 3.6.3.6.

The meaning of the conditional imperative construction can be formulated as follows:

**By uttering at  $t_0$  the imperative the speaker gives an impulse to the addressee to contribute to the realization of the imperative situation ( $\rightarrow$  SIT (V) $t_1$ ) by the subject (if the verb is personal) in a imagined world only, in order to describe the consequences of the hypothetical realization of this situation; this means that the speaker gives an impulse to the addressee to *imagine* the imperative situation.**

The frame given in Figure 3.16 can be used for the conditional imperative.

Figure 3.16

| Force   | Goal  | Subject of situation           | Object of force |
|---------|---|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| Speaker | $\rightarrow$ SIT(V <sub>+aspect</sub> ) $t_1$ in an imaginary world only | S= 1/ 2/ 3sg-pl/<br>impersonal | Addressee       |

The conditional imperative meaning given above presupposes that:

- (i) the imperative situation breaks the expected course of events
- (ii) the speaker commits himself to wanting to illustrate the relation of condition and consequence between the imperative and some other expressed situation

As I will argue below, the fact that the speaker gives an impulse directed at the imaginary realization of the imperative situation means that the addressee is not expected to imagine the realization of the imperative situation by himself. Consequently, the contrast between SIT (not V) and (SIT V), which is typical for of the other imperative uses, is also present in the case of the conditional imperative use. The semi-hortative meaning of the conditional imperative gives rise to the so-called subjective modal interpretations of the

conditional imperative use, features which are absent in the case of the conditional structure with *esli* and are also absent in the case of the subjunctive conditional.

Below I will go into the meaning of the conditional imperative in more detail. I will first discuss some semantic-syntactic features of the conditional imperative. The discussion of these features gives greater insight into the meaning and use of the conditional imperative. Further, I will discuss the relation between the conditional imperative with other imperative uses, and then discuss the subjective modal interpretations of the imperative in some detail.

### 3.6.3 Semantic-syntactic features

- (i) +aspect (perfective, imperfective)
- (ii) –tense
- (iii) +all subjects
- (iv) fixed VS order
- (v) no suffix *-te* ; occurrence of *-ka*
- (vi) occurrence of embedded conditional imperatives
- (vii) co-ordinated protasis-apodosis structure
- (viii) occurrence of *by* in the imperative clause
- (ix) lexical verbs

I will discuss some of these features below. For the absence of tense I refer to 3.1.

#### 3.6.3.1 Aspect

The conditional imperative occurs in both the perfective and the imperfective aspect, although most cases are perfective. The perfective aspect is chosen in those cases where the speaker wants to express that the realization of the imperative situation, including the natural or imposed end point of the situation, leads to another situation. The imperfective aspect is chosen in the case of inherently imperfective verbs and in those cases where the speaker wants to express that the existence of some state is the condition for some other action, e.g.:

- (166) **Porabotaj** oni tak, kak rabotaet Sara Bernar, **znaj** stol'ko, skol'ko ona znaet, oni daleko by poshli! (A. Chexov, 1988: 27)  
 work-IMP-PERF they-NOM so, as works Sarah Bernard, know-IMP-IMPERF so.much, how.much she knows, they far IRR went  
 'If they worked as Sarah Bernard works, if they knew what she knows, they would have (had) more success.'

In this sentence we find the imperfective imperative *znaj* (know-IMP); the nearest related perfective (*uznaj*) would convey the idea of proceeding from a situation of non-knowing into a situation of knowing, which is not what the speaker wants to convey.

### 3.6.3.2 Subject

The Russian imperative can be used with all persons, expressed in the nominative. In the case of the second person plural use, the plural suffix *-te* does not occur:

- (167) Ne **bud'** vy, a drugaja – ni za chto by ne poshel provozhat'. (A. Zoshchenko, 1935: 9)  
 not be-IMP you-NOM-PL, but other-NOM, not for what IRR not went accompany  
 'If it were not you but another woman, I would never accompany her home.'
- (168) Lichno mne vse edino, **bud'** vy xot' zelenogo cveta.<sup>100</sup> (Discussion about discrimination)  
 personally I-DAT all the.same, be-IMP you-NOM-PL even green color  
 'Personally, it's all the same to me, even if you had a green skin.'

The conditional imperative also occurs with impersonal constructions and a dative subject, and with impersonal subjectless verbs and constructions:

- (169) Verojatno, luchshe bylo by, **dovedis'** mal'chiku ispolnjat' svoe zhelanie. (*Russkaja Grammatika*, 1980, II/ Sharov)  
 probably, better was IRR, bring-REFL-IMP-PERF boy-DAT fulfill his wish  
 'Probably, it would have been better, had the boy gotten the opportunity to work on fulfilling his wish.'

---

<sup>100</sup> <http://www.forum.msk.ru:8084/files/990711152833.gb.html>

- (170) **Rassvetaj** segodnja poran'she, ja by vstal vo-vremja. (*Russkaja Grammatika*, 1980, II: 104/  
Durnovo)  
dawning-IMP-IMPERF today earlier, I IRR get.up in time  
'If teh dawn had started earlier, I would have got up on time.'
- (171) Tol'ko vot ljubvi u nas i malo, a **bud'** ee pobolee, – Grigorij Efimovich sokrushenno  
vzdoxnul, – ne to by, dorogoj, bylo.<sup>101</sup> (O. Platonov, *Zbizn' za carja*)  
just here of.love at us and little, but be-IMP she-GEN more, Grigorij Efimovich broken  
sighed. not that IRR, dear, was  
“But we have so little love, and if we had more of it”, Grigorij Efimovich said and  
sighed upset, “it would not be like this(, but things would be nice).”
- (172) Ne znaju, chto bylo ej izvestno o sotrudnichestve Èfrona s GPU, no dumaju, **bud'** ej  
izvestno dazhe vse, ona by ot nego ne otshatnulas'.<sup>102</sup> (Interview with I. Brodsky)  
not I.know, what was-IMPERS she-DAT known-ADV about cooperation of.Efron with  
GPU. but I.think, be-IMP she-DAT known-ADV even everything, she IRR from him not  
move.away  
'I didn't know what she knew about Efron's cooperation with the GPU, but I think that  
even if she had known everything, she would not have turned her back on him.'<sup>103</sup>

### 3.6.3.3 Word order

The prototypical word order of the conditional is VS (in those cases where S is expressed). The first position of the imperative clause is prototypically taken by the imperative, but the verb may be preceded by the conjunction *chto* ('that'), negation, or particles like *nu*, *da*, etc. In most cases the subject is put immediately after the verb, but the verb and the subject may be separated by other constituents, as in (163) above, or as in the following sentence, where the verb and subject are separated by an indirect object:

---

<sup>101</sup> <http://moshkov.perm.ru/lat/PLATONOWO/rasputin.txt>

<sup>102</sup> <http://lib.ru/lat/BRODSKIJ/wolkow.txt>

<sup>103</sup> In the case of the impersonal construction with *sluchit'sja* ('happen') the conditional imperative can occur with a verb in the perfective present: – A kuda denesh'sja, – otvechala jarkaja ènergichnaja devushka-korotyshka. – Ja uzhe na ètu zarplatu dva groba sebe pripasla. Sluchis' pomru, a groby u menja pod rukoj. (<http://www.rvb.ru:8090/mamleev/01prose/2stories/5end/01-2-5-08.htm>); (...) happens-IMP die-PRES-PERF-1SG...; (...) 'If it happens that I die...'. Perhaps, a tendency toward grammaticalization of *sluchis'* can be perceived here.

- (173) (...), ne **bud'** emu okazana vsestoronnjaja pomoshch' mirovym soobshchestvom.<sup>104</sup>  
 (...), not be-IMP he-DAT [=people of Kuwait] given from.all.sides help-NOM by.world  
 community  
 '(...), if the extensive help from the world community had not been given to the people of  
 Kuwait.'

The subject may be followed by another constituent, or group of constituents V S X. The last accent of the conditional construction may be on the imperative:

- (174) Mne kazhetsja, chto **vyskazhis'** my – i vse pojdet po-staromu.  
 me seems, that speak.out-IMP-PERF we – and all goes as before  
 'It seems to me that if we speak out, everything will become as before.'

In most cases, however, the last accent is on another constituent (e.g. *Razgoris' atomnyj poZHAR*; in (160)). Note that the information structure of the conditional imperative sentence is different from the optative imperative sentence because of the co-ordinate protasis-apodosis structure of these sentences. This could imply that the last accent of the sentence always falls in the final clause. It seems, however, that the protasis of the clause can be seen as an independent information unit as far as the word order and information structure is concerned. Additional evidence for this is that the order of the protasis and apodosis may be changed (protasis-apodosis to apodosis-protasis), without changing the placement of the last accent in the protasis.

The occurrence of an SV order with conditional imperatives is a very rare phenomenon. The only example of an SV order in the case of the conditional imperative that I have found is the following sentence<sup>105</sup>:

- (175) Da, pravda, ne svoi bedy – dlja vas zabavy. Otec rodnoj **ubejsja** – vse ravno.  
 (Muravickaja, 1973: 54/ Griboedov)  
 yes, true, not own misfortune, for you amusement. father-NOM own-NOM kill-REFL-  
 IMP-PERF, all the.same  
 'Yes, indeed, someone else's misfortune is amusement to you. Your own father may even  
 kill himself/ get killed, for you it's nothing.'

The relatively fixed VS(X) word order of the conditional imperative, but also of the optative imperative, cannot be explained (solely) in terms of the division of the clause

<sup>104</sup> <http://www.russ.ru:8085/edu/99-07-05/logunov.htm>

<sup>105</sup> The concessive character of this sentence is discussed in 3.6.5.2.

into topic and focus; rather the fixed word order must be connected with the specific meaning of the conditional imperative construction. Note that the same fixed VS order also occurs in the case of the subjunctive conditional without conditional conjunction, and infinitive conditional:

- (176) Uchilsja by syn, mat' by ne ogorchalas'. (*Russkaja Grammatika*, 1980, II: 104–105)  
studied IRR son, mother IRR not was.sad  
'If the son had studied/ would study, the mother would not have been/ be sad.'
- (177) Prijti by tebe ran'she, i my obo vsem by dogovorilis'. (Formanovskaja, 1989: 42)  
come-INF-PERF IRR you-DAT earlier, and we about everything IRR reach.agreement  
'If only you had come earlier, we could have reached an agreement about everything.'

Deviance from this order may probably occur under particular circumstances. Shvedova (1967: 75) gives the following sentence with SV order in the protasis:

- (178) Noch' byla by, tak on by sumel skryt'sja.  
night was IRR, so he IRR could hide  
'If it were night, he could hide.'

The basic word order for the conditional imperative clause is VS(X), and perhaps more specifically (X)VS(Y) where the X may be filled with the subject. The VS order is relatively fixed and cannot be explained solely in terms of the theme-rheme division of the clause. I have argued earlier, in 3.5.3.3, that the VS order can possibly be motivated as follows:

*SV<sub>imp</sub> order*

the expression of the subject presupposes the existence of some action, the identity of which is given later.

*V<sub>imp</sub>S order*

the expression of the verb means that the existence of the action is introduced in a hypothetical mental space or world, and presupposes the existence of a subject when the verbs is personal.

In the case of optative and conditional sentences the existence of the situation expressed by the verb is not given but introduced in the discourse. In such sentences the verb carries the most important information in the clause, which may motivate its clause initial position; the subject in such sentences has the character of additional information. The verb itself expresses independent information, and the identity of the subject can be seen as an addition to this information. As I remarked earlier, the conditional situation could be seen as the supposition of a hypothetical action to be true. It is only against the background of this supposition that the prediction expressed by the apodisis can be understood. Because of the background status, it may be natural that the first position is taken by the imperative.

Note that the tentative analysis here also accounts for the first position of the conjunctions *esli* and *pust'* in the case of conditional and optative sentences. It may be that the idea of backgrounding is related to contrast between a real situation and some supposed situation expressed by the imperative. However, the exact relation between topicality, or background, and hypotheticality is not clear to me.

The VS order under discussion can possibly be compared to VS order in other languages such as Dutch. The VSX order in Dutch is called inversion of the basic word order pattern; in Dutch, the basic word order is verb second, which means that the finite verb normally comes in the second position. Inversion of the word order pattern SV is typical for optatives, conditionals, questions, and in the case of contrast:<sup>106</sup>

- (179) Kwam hij maar. (optativeness)  
 came he but  
 'If only he came.'
- (180) Komt hij, dan ga ik ook. (condition)  
 comes he, then I go too  
 'If he comes, I will come as well.'
- (181) Komt hij? (question)  
 comes he

---

<sup>106</sup> Further note that a VS order also occurs in sentences where the first constituent is not expressed, e.g. *Doen we!* ('We will do that'). Sentences like these can be said to adhere to the V2 principle of Dutch. Other sentences where the VS order occurs, are sentences where the verb indicates some unexpected action, e.g.: *Ik loop op straat, komt zij er opeens aan*, 'I am walking on the street, when suddenly she comes up to me.' It may be that such sentences adhere to the V2 principle, because the first clause must be seen as the first constituent, or suggest the idea of 'at that particular moment'.

Is he coming?

- (182) Komt Peter vaak te laat, Jan komt nooit te laat. (contrast))  
comes Peter often too late, Jan comes never too late  
'Whereas Peter often comes late, Jan never is late.'

What these contexts have in common is that in all cases the action is supposed, rather than asserted.<sup>107</sup> This means that the speaker does not give a description of the state of affairs of the real world, but gives an invitation to imagine an action to be true. This can be explained for the different context in the following way. In (179) the speaker pictures a hypothetical world where the desired action takes place. In (180) the speaker pictures a hypothetical world where the action takes place, in order to describe the consequences of this action. In (181) the speaker pictures a hypothetical world where the action takes place and asks whether this situation applies in the real world. In (182) the speaker invites the addressee to accept the validity of the proposition, in order to contrast it with another situation.

A final word should be said about the status of the VS order of the conditional imperative. I have argued that the VS order must be explained from the meaning of the conditional imperative. Note that a particular word order need not necessarily point at a particular interpretation; a VS order can point at the topical status of the verb in general and does not necessarily point at the hypothetical status of the verb. Furthermore, a VS order in the case of the imperative need not necessarily point at a conditional (or optative) interpretation; we find VS order in the case of other imperative uses as well, for example in the case of the narrative. The specific conditional or optative meaning requires a specific word order, and the specific word order together with the rest of the context and the meaning of the imperative points in the direction of a particular interpretation.

---

<sup>107</sup> In generative treatments (Model, 1991: 62) the VS order in the case of the Dutch conditional is 'explained' by pointing at the notion of complementary distribution. In this case this means that the finite verb is moved to the complementizer place only if this place is not taken by another constituent. Because of this we get the configuration {C...V<sub>[+fin]</sub>} in the case of a conditional adverb, and the configuration {V<sub>[+fin]</sub>...r} in the case of absence of a conditional adverb. It remains to be explained, then, which element is missing in the other cases. Furthermore, this does not explain the semantic relation between the different contexts.

### 3.6.3.4 Absence and presence of directive-hortative features

The conditional imperative cannot be seen as a directive use, which is underlined by the following features:

- absence of the suffix *-te* in the case of the second person plural (see sentences (167), (168) above)
- occurrence of the conditional imperative in embedded clauses (see (174) above)

The hortative character is, however, underlined by the occurrence of the suffix *-ka*. Such occurrences are rare, but Garde (1963: 215) gives two examples:

- (183) **Znaj-ka** on umnye-to slova, po nashej by storone mnogo mog vyigrat'. (Garde, 1963: 215/ Ostrovskij)  
 know-IMP-IMPERF PRT he wise-PRT words, for our IRR side much could win  
 'If he knew these wise words, he could win a lot for our side.'
- (184) **Dovedi-ka** ja kakim-nibud' processom nashu pargalovskuju glinu do togo, chtoby iz nego vyxodil farfor luchshe saksonskogo ili sevreskogo, tak ty думаеш, тут не было бы prisutstvija vysshej sily? (Garde, 1963: 215/ Goncharov)  
 accompany-IMP-PERF-PRT I with.some process our Pargalovskij clay till that, in.order.to from it came porcelain better than.Saxonian or from.Sevres, then you think, here not was IRR presence of.highest power?  
 'If I turned our clay from Pargalov through some kind of process into something from which you can make porcelain better than Saxonian porcelain or porcelain from Sevres, would you really think that there would not be a presence of a higher power?'

### 3.6.3.5 Sentence structure

The following features are relevant for the conditional imperative:

- occurrence of the conditional imperative in a coordinate structure
- possibility of introduction of the second clause with *i*
- prototypically protasis-apodosis order (deviance is possible)

The sentence of the conditional imperative can, like any conditional, be divided into a *protasis* and an *apodosis*. In the protasis the condition is expressed, and in the apodosis the

consequences are expressed. The regular order is protasis-apodosis, although the reverse order occurs as well:

- (185) Ona nikogda by ne dogadalas', chto on – chuzhak, ne skazhi on ob ètom.<sup>108</sup> (A. Azimov, *Galka v nebe*)  
she never IRR not guessed, that he, alien, not tell-IMP-PERF he-NOM about that  
'She would never have guessed that he was an alien, had he not told her about it.'

Note that this differs from the directive conditional imperative, where an apodosis-protasis order is not possible. It is typical of conditional sentences with *esli* ('if') that the protasis can be seen as a subordinate clause, and the apodosis as a main clause. In the case of the conditional imperative, however, it is better to speak of a coordinate complex. This means that the conditional sentence consists of two clauses that are conjoined, and form a semantic and syntactic unit. There are different ways in which the two clauses may be coordinated:

- the apodosis (in sentences with a protasis-apodosis order) is introduced with a pause, graphically represented with '–' (as in (167))
- the apodosis (in sentences with a protasis-apodosis order) is introduced with the conjunction *i* ('and') (as in (164)), or in the case of a concessive interpretation with *a* ('but'):

- (186) **Bud'** on semi pjaden' po lbu, a ot suda moego ne ujet. (Garde, 1963: 210/ Pushkin)  
be-IMP he seven pjad'around forehead, but from my judgment not will.go.away  
'Even if he is a real genius, he won't escape my judgment.'

- the apodosis (in sentences with a protasis-apodosis order) is introduced with a pause and then a conjunction (as in (160))
- the apodosis is introduced with *kak* (as in (161))
- the apodosis is introduced with *to*:

- (187) **Opozdaĵ** on xot' na minutu, to vse pogiblo. (Barentsen, p.c.)  
come.late-IMP-PERF he just on minute, then all was.lost  
'If he will be just one minute too late, everything is lost.'

---

<sup>108</sup> <http://www.moshkow.pp.ru:5000/lat/FOUNDATION/pebblsky.txt>

According to Formanovskaja (1989), in Russian an implicational clause can be introduced by *i* if the conditional character is not expressed by a conditional conjunction (*esli*).<sup>109</sup> In Russian conditionality can be expressed without *esli* in the case of subjunctive conditional use, conditional use with infinitive and *by*, imperative use, and perfective present conditional use. Formanovskaja paraphrases this use of the conjunction *i* with *i togda* ('and then') or *i v ètom sluchae* ('in that case'). According to Formanovskaja *esli* can be left away because the conditional character is expressed by the VP itself; the same argumentation may explain the absence of *i* in the case of *esli*: [*Esli* A, *i* B] can only be interpreted as [*Esli* [A *i* B]] because *esli* has an inherent conditional meaning. As in the case of the conditional directive imperative use (see 3.2.4.1), the conjunction *i* can occur in the case of the imperative because it indicates the temporal sequence of the realization of the imperative action, and the consequences of this action, whereas *esli* A, B does not express the idea of the realization of an action, and consequently the realization of another action, but rather expresses that in those worlds where A is the case, B is the case as well (which is usually interpreted as a causal effect of A on B).<sup>110</sup>

### 3.6.3.6 Particle *by*

In some cases the particle *by* is conjoined with the imperative; such cases have a counterfactual interpretation, and mostly seem to occur with the verb *byt'*.<sup>111</sup> An example was given above in (165); two other examples are given below:

---

<sup>109</sup> On the basis of the data that I have seen, I suspect that the conjunction *i* occurs more frequently in the case of hypothetical condition, than in the case of counterfactual condition. This may perhaps be connected with the fact that in the case of the counterfactual the imperative situation will not be realized in reality, in contrast to the hypothetical imperative.

<sup>110</sup> Because of this reading, sentences with *esli* can also be used in contexts where the conditional relation does not convey that A leads to B, but that on the basis of A, one can conclude B (e.g. *If the lights are on, John must be home*). This sentence expresses that on the basis of the protasis, one can conclude that the situation expressed in the apodosis is the case. Such sentences do not convey the idea of a condition between situations expressed as a causal effect that can be perceived in time (B follows A in time, because A leads to B).

<sup>111</sup> The *Russkaja Grammatika* (1980, II: 104) gives an example with *zajdi*; I give it here with some additional context: *Da zajdi b on ko mne, ja by emu polnuju kajstru za glaza nasypal .... Na, beri – svinej kormim, ne zbal' der'ma dlja xoroshego cheloveka!* (A. Fadeev, *Razgrom*); PRT came-IMP-PERF IRR he to me, (...); 'Well, if he came up to me, I would pour out for him as much as a whole bag .... Here, take it, we feed the pigs with it, we can give a good man as much as he likes of that shit!'

- (188) **Bud'** by K. dejstvitel'no podlecom, on by sejchas spokojno by nezhilsja sebe gde-nibud' na belom pesochke pod zharkim solnyshkom, navsegda zabyv pro ètu stranu.<sup>112</sup>  
(Internet forum)  
be-IMP IRR K. really scoundrel, he IRR now quietly IRR cherish himself somewhere on white sand under hot sun, for.always having.forgotten about this land  
'If K. really were a scoundrel, he would now be enjoying himself somewhere on the white sand under the burning sun, forever having forgotten this land.'
- (189) Nu, **bud'** by eshche kakoj zhanr, no fantastika – i bez novizny?<sup>113</sup>  
but be-IMP IRR still other genre, but fantasy, and without new things?  
'Well, had it been another genre, [it would not have been so bad,] but fantasy, and than without any innovation? [that's no good].'

I suspect that the particle in these sentences is used to emphasize that the realization, occurrence or being the case of the imperative situation is contrary to the facts:<sup>114</sup> in (188) because the speaker does not think that K. is a scoundrel, and in (189) because it is clear that the genre in question is fantasy.

### 3.6.3.7 Lexical meaning of the imperative verbs

There are no special restrictions on the verbs that occur in the construction with the conditional imperative, although, as I will explain below, the meaning of the construction may impose particular restrictions on the verbs that can occur in the construction. (See 3.6.5). Garde (1963: 213–214) claims that in the nineteenth century the construction under discussion (with third persons) occurred in the majority of studied cases with the verb *byl'*, and with the verb *popast'sja*, but also with other verbs; however, in the twentieth century the conditional imperative construction almost exclusively occurs with the verb *byl'*. Garde (1963: 214) even says about *bud'* that it has become “un simple équivalent de l'expression un peu lourde *esli by byl'*”. The data at my disposal do not confirm Garde's observation that in the twentieth century the construction only occurs with *byl'*; as my examples show, the

---

<sup>112</sup> <http://www.forum.msk.ru:8084/files/981215124655.gb.html>

<sup>113</sup> <http://sf.glasnet.ru:8105/esli/rubr/kritika/es497gak.htm>

<sup>114</sup> In Dutch these two sentences can be translated with the particle *nou*: 'als het nou zo was dat X'.

construction occurs with different types of verbs, but nevertheless the verb *byť* is relatively frequent.<sup>115</sup>

### 3.6.4 The conditional imperative and the other imperative uses

In this subsection I will show how the conditional imperative is related to the other imperative uses, especially the optative imperative. I will argue that the conditional imperative can be seen as a hortative imperative in a weakened form.

In the literature opinions differ about the relation between the conditional imperative and the other imperative uses. Two main opinions are given below:

- (i) The conditional imperative can be seen as a *directive* use of the imperative where the speaker gives an impulse to the hearer to *suppose* an action, instead of *performing* it (Ebeling, 1956).
- (ii) The conditional imperative can be seen as an extended case of the optative imperative (e.g. Isachenko, 1957; Percov, 1998).

In my opinion, both opinions are to some extent valid. Below I will discuss these opinions, and then give my own extended analysis.

According to Ebeling the conditional use of the imperative can be compared to the directive use of the imperative because both cases concern “an action fulfilled as the result of a foreign impulse or permission”. According to him, both in the case of the directive use and in that of the conditional use the speaker can be seen as the giver of the impulse, who gives an impulse to the hearer. In the case of the directive imperative the speaker gives an impulse to the hearer to *perform* the imperative action, whereas in the case of the conditional imperative the speaker gives an impulse to the hearer to *suppose* the imperative action. The description given by Ebeling (1956) seems to imply that the conditional imperative can be paraphrased in English with ‘suppose that’. This means that the speaker gives an impulse to the hearer to perform the action of supposing.

The relation between conditionality and the act of supposing is underlined by the fact that conditionality in general is sometimes said to be an expression of supposition. Take for example the following extract from ANS (1984) where it is claimed that the Dutch marker of conditionality (*als*), which is comparable to the English *if*, can be paraphrased

---

<sup>115</sup> If the relatively frequent occurrence of *byť* is higher in the case of the conditional imperative than in the case of oppositional forms, I propose that this be attributed this to the meaning of the imperative conditional construction (although morphological features may also play a part (cf. Garde (1963)).

### *The Russian imperative*

with ‘suppose that/ imagine that’: “*als* is te omschrijven met ‘stel dat’”. If we accept that in the case of the conditional imperative there is a direction from the speaker to the hearer to suppose a situation, we can see a close semantic relation between conditional imperatives and directive imperatives that occur in a conditional context as discussed above in 3.2.4.1. In a conditional directive sentence like (48) above it can be argued that the hearer is instructed to imagine himself to be the agent of the action. In the case of the conditional imperative the idea of performing the imperative action is not present, but the idea of performing the act of supposing is present.

Although the relation sketched here between the conditional imperative and the directive imperative seems plausible, there are some indications that one cannot speak of an impulse to suppose a fact in the case of the conditional imperative in the same way as one can speak about a impulse to suppose a fact in the case of the conditional directive imperative. That ‘direction to the hearer to perform an act’ is part of the meaning of the directive conditional imperative, and not of the non-directive conditional imperative, or other conditional constructions, nor of other conditional constructions with *esli*, can be shown by the following features:

#### *Directive imperative with conditional interpretation*

- suffix *-te* with second person plural
- apodosis-protasis order
- no occurrence in embedded clauses

#### *Conditional imperative*

- no suffix *-te* with second person plural
- apodosis-protasis/ protasis-apodosis order
- occurrence in embedded clauses

What these facts show is that the conditional directive must be seen as a directive use where the notion of *performance of the imperative situation* plays an essential part, which is not the case for the conditional imperative.

Firstly, in contrast to the directive imperative with a conditional interpretation, the conditional imperative does not occur with the suffix *-te*. The presence of *-te* indicates that the conditional directive imperative is a directive use; in the case of conditional sentences this means that the speaker acts *as if* the addressee is to perform the imperative situation.

This description does not account for the conditional imperative, where the speaker only wants the hearer to *imagine* the imperative situation.

Secondly, in contrast to the conditional imperative, the order of the directive imperative sentences with a conditional character is always apodosis-protasis. This fact can be explained with reference to the principle of *iconic ordering* as defined in Dik's (1989) Functional Grammar:

Constituent ordering is a matter of Iconic Patterning to the extent that the order of constituents, say AB, in some sense corresponds to the temporal or psychological order of the items A and B.

According to the principle of iconic patterning it can be expected that the order of AB in the sentence reflects the temporal/ psychological order of AB. In the case of directive use this implies that you first have to direct someone to suppose a certain act or situation (A), and then you can name the consequences of the realization of that act or situation (B). If we accept this principle, the incorrectness of an apodosis-protasis order in the case of the conditional directive use can be explained, because in this case the implication is given before the condition. We can say that the occurrence of the order BA is psychologically strange when A must be seen as an impulse from the speaker to the hearer to do ('suppose') a certain situation.<sup>116</sup>

Thirdly, another argument against the hypothesis that the conditional imperative is connected with the feature of 'performing' a situation, is the fact that the conditional imperative can occur in a subordinate clause introduced by *chto* ('that') (see (174) above). Directive imperatives do not occur in subordinate clauses with *chto*, because the speaker-addressee context is absent there.

On this basis it can be argued that if we understand the notion of directivity in the same way as in the case of the directive imperative use, the meaning of the conditional imperative cannot be defined as 'an impulse from the speaker to the hearer to suppose a certain fact'. Further evidence for this is the occurrence of cases that have both an optative and a conditional character (sentences where the realization of the imperative action is wished because it leads to desirable consequences expressed in another clause). In Ebeling's approach, conditional cases would have to be seen as sentences where the speaker gives an impulse to the hearer to imagine an action by some agent expressed in

---

<sup>116</sup> Note that the same principle may also account for the strong *tendency* that in conditional sentences the protasis (A) comes before the apodosis (B). It should be noted, however, that this is just a tendency: conditional sentences where the order is BA do occur.

the nominative, whereas optative cases would have to be seen as sentences where the speaker gives an impulse to a third person nominative subject to perform/ fulfill the imperative action. In my opinion, such an analysis does not adequately describe the similarities and differences between these uses.

Another approach to the conditional imperative is advocated that by Isachenko (1957), who claims that the conditional imperative must use be seen as closely related to the optative use, and even as an *extension* of the optative use. This meaning is expressed by Isachenko in the following extract:

“Genetically it is not difficult to show that we find here [that is, in imperative conditional cases like *Pridi ja ran'she, nichego by ne sluchilos'*] a case of transposition of the imperative. We only have to reconstruct the modality of wish of the first part of the sentence by means of the corresponding interjection, and the origin of such constructions becomes clear: *O, vernis' ja ran'she! Nichego by ne sluchilos'*. [‘O, if only I had come earlier, Nothing would have happened.’]. In modern language, of course, this modality of wish is lost.” (Isachenko, 1957: 10–11)<sup>117</sup>

In the extract above Isachenko claims that the conditional must be seen as a transferred case of the optative. Consider the following sentences:

- (190) O, vernis' ja ran'she! Nichego by ne sluchilos'.  
o return-IMP-PERF I earlier! nothing IRR not happened  
“O, if only I had come earlier. Nothing would have happened.”

In the first sentence of this example the imperative action is desired by the speaker. In the second sentence the consequences of this desirable act are mentioned. This can be seen as an explanation of the desirability of the situation conveyed by the optative clause. Because the action conveyed by the optative is desired by the speaker of the sentence, we can see the content of the optative situation as volition proceeding from the speaker and directed at the realization of the imperative situation. In the case of the conditional the aspect of desire is lost: the speaker no longer wishes the imperative action.

In my opinion Isachenko's suggestion to relate the conditional imperative to the optative imperative is right, but his analysis is incomplete and is not sustained by any kind of synchronic or diachronic evidence. First of all, Isachenko claims without any

---

<sup>117</sup> “Geneticheski netrudno pokazat', chto zdes' nalico transpozicija imperativa. Stoit to'ko vosstanovit' zhelatel'nuju modal'nost' pervogo predlozhenija vvedeniem sootvetstvujushchego mezhdometija, i kartina vozniknovenija takix postroenij stanet jasna: *O, vernis' ja ran'she! Nichego by ne sluchilos'*. V sovremennom jazyke eta zhelatel'naja modal'nost', konečno, utrachena” (Isachenko, 1957: 10–11).

explanation or reference, that it is ‘very easy’ to show that there is a genetic relation between the optative imperative and the conditional imperative; to my knowledge, however, no diachronic research has been done on the proposed relation. Secondly, Isachenko relates the *counterfactual* conditional imperative to the *non-counterfactual* optative imperative, which makes the proposed analysis not entirely accurate. Thirdly, Isachenko does not discuss the meaning of the conditional use in detail; more specifically, he does not address the question of how the conditional imperative differs from oppositional use such as constructions with *esli*, and how the difference in use between these constructions is related to a difference in meaning.

In my opinion the suggestion made by Isachenko (1957) to relate the optative imperative to the conditional imperative is sustained by the following correspondence of formal features:

*Optative imperative* ↔ *Conditional imperative*

- VS order
- absence of the suffix *-te* in the case of the second person plural
- conjunction of the imperative with the particle *by* (IRR) in some cases

What these features show is that both the optative imperative and the conditional imperative have no *directive* meaning, that is, there is no impulse from the speaker to the *addressee* to *perform* an action. One can speak of directivity if the speaker wants to contribute to the performance of the action by the addressee-subject by uttering the imperative form. A typical directive use is the basic directive imperative use. Here the speaker has the idea of contributing to the realization of the imperative action because he thinks that he can manipulate the addressee-performer present in the speech context. In the case of the optative imperative the directive context is not present, although one can speak of *indirect* direction. In the case of the optative the speaker gives an impulse to the hearer or some other specified or non-specified entity to contribute to the realization of the imperative action. In the case of the conditional the idea of direction is weakened even more, since the speaker wants the realization of the imperative action in a hypothetical world only. In the case of the conditional imperative the speaker assumes the imperative situation to be true (→ SIT (V)) for the sake of the argument. This act of supposition can be seen as an invitation by the speaker to the hearer to imagine a situation. As I argued earlier, such an invitation cannot be equated with a direction to *perform* an action: in the case of such a direction the speaker wants to direct the behavior of the addressee, whereas

in the case of an invitation, the speaker pictures to himself an action, and in doing this invites the hearer to picture the same situation.

In modern Russian, there is no clear semantic relation between the conditional imperative and the optative imperative, since the optative imperative is no longer a productive use of the imperative anymore. This means that it cannot be argued that the conditional imperative can only be *understood* on the basis of the optative imperative, analogous to understanding the conditional directive imperative on the basis of the basic directive imperative. Nevertheless, a diachronic relation may be reconstructed between the optative imperative and the conditional imperative as follows:

- a. Optative imperative
- b. Optative imperative with conditional structure
- c. Hypothetical conditional imperative
- d. Counterfactual conditional imperative

The optative imperative is used to express that the speaker gives an impulse to some concrete or abstract entity present in the speech situation to realize the imperative action. This optative sentence can be extended with a clause where the desirable consequences of the realization of the imperative action are mentioned ( $a \rightarrow b$ ). In those cases in which the optative clause is conjoined with another clause, the situation of the clause following the imperative clause is interpreted as the apodosis of the optative clause. This relation of 'implication' has the character of a temporal sequence: the occurrence of some situation X is followed in time by the occurrence of situation Y. In my opinion, the idea of immediate temporal sequence of two events is closely related to the idea of a conditional relation between two events. In those cases where the occurrence of some event is always followed by the occurrence of some other event, it is natural to see the occurrence of the first event as the condition for the occurrence of the second.

The next step ( $b \rightarrow c$ ) can be reconstructed as a case where the speaker acts *as if* he directs the hearer or some abstract entity to contribute to the realization of the imperative action. This means that the idea of actual wish to realize the action is lost, but that the feature of wish reoccurs in a modified way. In this case the speaker does not wish the realization of the action in this world because of the desirable consequences of this realization, but rather wishes the realization of the action in a possible world, only in order to describe the consequences of this hypothetical realization; this means that the speaker wants the addressee to imagine the imperative situation. The imperative in such sentences has become a device for reasoning about things, rather than as a device for expressing a

wish or desire, and for realizing this wish by manipulation. In this case there can be no restrictions in terms of controllability on the imperative verb, since the speaker only wants the addressee to *imagine* the imperative situation.

The loss of the feature of wish must have helped the occurrence of the conditional in counterfactual cases ( $c \rightarrow d$ ). Here it is clear that the action cannot be realized, because it only occurs in a counterfactual world.<sup>118</sup> Note furthermore that, considering the data at my disposal, the counterfactual conditional imperative use is more frequently than the hypothetical conditional imperative use. It may be that the frequent occurrence of *by* is related to the specific meaning of the conditional imperative use, namely the fact that the speaker gives an impulse to the addressee to imagine a certain situation. As I will motivate below, this specific feature means that the imperative situation breaks the expected course of events. This feature accords with counterfactual cases, where it is explicitly expressed that the realization of the imperative situation is not in accordance with the actual way things happened, or the actual way reality is. The productive occurrence of the conditional imperative in the twentieth century, which contrasts with the non-productive use of the optative imperative, may also be motivated by the loss of the feature of wish. As I argued above, the optative imperative use probably declined under the influence of the oppositional form *pust'*. This form, however, is not (strictly speaking) an oppositional form of the imperative used as a conditional. It may be that when the function of the optative imperative was taken over by *pust'*, the conditional imperative had already taken its unique position in the linguistic structure, and survived when its source – the optative – declined.

In this section I have argued that the conditional imperative must be seen as an extended optative imperative where the feature of 'wish' is weakened. The quasi-hortative character of the conditional imperative accounts for its specific semantics, more particularly its subjective modal nature, and the difference in meaning from oppositional forms. The subjective modal nature of the conditional imperative will be the theme of the next section.

### 3.6.5 Subjective modal interpretations of the conditional imperative

In this section I will discuss the so-called 'subjective modal' interpretations of the conditional imperative. These subjective modal features are absent in the case of the

---

<sup>118</sup> Note, however, that since the process of meaning extension (metaphor, metonymy, etc.) is a basic strategy of humans, it may be that different extensions have been part of the imperative use from the very start. Study of diachronic data may possibly give insight into this question.

oppositional form *esli*. I will argue that the difference between these forms is connected with the semi-directive feature of the conditional imperative. I will argue that the contrast between the imperative situation (SIT(V<sub>imp</sub>)) and the situation that is imagined before the impulse to realize the imperative situation is given (SIT(not V<sub>imp</sub>)) is essential for the meaning of the conditional imperative, and that this feature is absent from the meaning of conditional sentences with *esli* ('if'). The contrast between these two situations relates to the notion of *impulse* and the idea of *breaking the expected course of events*. In the case of the conditional imperative the speaker gives an impulse to the addressee to imagine the imperative situation for two reasons:

- It can be expected that the addressee does not imagine the imperative situation because he does not expect that the realization of the imperative action will lead to the scene expressed in the apodosis.
- The imperative situation itself is unexpected, and therefore something that the addressee does not imagine.

This contrastive nature of the conditional imperative, or put differently, the idea of breaking the expected course of events, is often called 'modal'. The following different modal interpretations can be distinguished:

- a. Character of unexpectedness
- b. Character of immediate implication/ restriction ('only' character)
- c. Character of concession ('even' character)

The different interpretations are the result of the context in which the imperative occurs and the presuppositions of the interpreter. Note that in some cases it is difficult to distinguish between these different interpretations. This is a natural consequence of the fact that they are interpretations of the same basic meaning. Note furthermore, that the interpretations (b) and (c) also occurred in the case of the conditional directive imperative use (see 3.2.4.1); these interpretations have essentially the same structure as the conditional imperative interpretations under discussion.

In the literature some remarks are made about this so-called modal character, although the systematic relation between the different interpretations and the relation of these interpretations to the imperative meaning is not recognized. Here I will briefly discuss the different interpretations.

## 3.6.5.1 Character of unexpectedness

Conditional imperatives with a character of ‘unexpectedness’ are difficult to define because there are no additional formal specifications as in the case of the restrictive or concessive interpretation. The nature of unexpectedness is, however, remarked by various authors, such as Isachenko (1957: 10–11):

“In modern language, of course, the modality of wish [that is in the case of the conditional] is lost, but something of modality, different from the modality of the actual conditional, has been preserved; consider: ‘*On sterpel by, ne nachni Mèri vse chashche i chashche zagovarivat’ o položhenii cvetnych. (...)*’ [‘He would have been able to stand, if Mary had not started to talk about the situation of the non-white people. (...)’] One could argue that *ne nachni* means something like ‘if she had not by accident (as if to annoy him).’”<sup>119</sup>

Vasil’eva (1969: 42) observes that the conditional imperative can express additional meaning features of ‘sluchajnost’ (‘coincidental’) or ‘neozhidannost’ (‘unexpectedness’). She suggests that the following sentences can be rendered to conditional imperative cases without the additional specifications:<sup>120</sup>

- (191) – A esli by Pojarkov **vdrug** voskres? Chto by ty emu teper’ skazal?  
but if IRR Pojarkov suddenly rose? what IRR you him now said?  
‘But what if Pojarkov suddenly rose from death? What would you tell him?’
- (192) My tak davno ne videlis’, chto esli by on **sluchajno** vstretilsja, ja by ego ne uznala.  
we so long not saw.eachother, that if IRR he accidentally met, I IRR not him recognized  
‘We haven’t seen each other for such a long time that if he were to accidentally meet me, I would not recognize him.’

In the following sentences with a conditional imperative an element of unexpectedness might be observed although they lack the specifications as *vdrug* or *sluchajno* (occurring in (191) and (192)):

<sup>119</sup> “V sovremennom jazyke èta zhelatel’naja modal’nost’, konečno, utrachena, no soxranilos’ nekaja modal’nost’, otličnaja ot modal’nosti chisto uslovnoj ili soslagatel’noj; sr.: ‘*On sterpel by, ne nachni Mèri vse chashche i chashche zagovarivat’ o položhenii cvetnych (...)*.’ Ved’ zdes’ *ne nachni* možno tolkovat’ kak ‘*ne nachni sluchajno, kak na zlo*.’” (Isachenko, 1957: 10–11)

<sup>120</sup> Vasil’eva (1969: 42) suggests that meaning features like ‘neozhidannost’’, ‘sluchajnost’’, ‘zhelatel’nost’’ can be said to be part of the conditional *meaning*. These features do not, however, occur in every conditional case. I would therefore prefer the term conditional *interpretation*.

- (193) *Mozhno li chto-to sdelat'?* Ili krovoprolitie nikogda ne konchitsja? Vse delo v Vejnte.  
*Umri* ona – i vzaimnoe istreblenie prekratitsja.<sup>121</sup> (G. Garrison, *Zima v èdeme*)  
may-ADV PRT something do-INF? or bloodshed never not will.stop? all case in  
Vejnta. die-IMP-PERF she, and mutual destruction will.end  
'Is there something that we can do? Or will the bloodshed never end? It's all connected  
to Vejnta. If she dies, the mutual destruction will come to an end.'
- (194) I vrjad li 'judi v chernom' vpolnili by zadachu, ne **pomogi** im v nuzhnyj moment  
milaja ledi-patologoanatom Lorel. (From description of the film 'Men in Black')<sup>122</sup>  
and probably not 'men in black' performed IRR task, not help-IMP-PERF them in  
necessary moment sweet lady-pathologist-NOM Lorel  
'And probably the men in black wouldn't have performed their task, were it not that the  
lady-pathologist Lorel had not helped them at the right moment.'

In the following extract the speaker expresses that he is offended by people who use English on a Russian discussion page on the Internet:

- (195) *Interesno, kakov byl by èffekt, **zajdi** ja na kakoj-nibud' amerikanskij forum i nachni tam pisat' na russkom jazyke?*<sup>123</sup>  
interesting, what was IRR effect, visit-IMP-PERF I-NOM on some American forum and  
start-IMP-PERF there write on Russian language  
'It would be interesting to know what the effect would be, if I visited some American  
forum and started to write in Russian.'

The character of unexpectedness is due to the fact that in the case of the conditional imperative the speaker gives an impulse to imagine the imperative situation. This means that the hearer is not expected to imagine the imperative situation himself. In the case of the sentences under discussion, this is because the situation itself is unexpected. Consequently, there is a contrast between the imperative situation and the normal expected situation. Cases like these can also be seen as cases of immediate implication as discussed in the following subsection because they express that the reality could very well have been/ be different, if only the imperative situation had not been/ is the case. In such

---

<sup>121</sup> [http:// kulichki-lat.rambler.ru/ moshkow/ GARRISON/ edem3.txt](http://kulichki-lat.rambler.ru/moshkow/GARRISON/edem3.txt)

<sup>122</sup> [http:// www.magister.msk.ru:8085/ library/ extelop/ cinema/ 11/ 111001.htm](http://www.magister.msk.ru:8085/library/extelop/cinema/11/111001.htm)

<sup>123</sup> [http:// www.forum.msk.ru:8084/ files/ guestbook-po981205.html](http://www.forum.msk.ru:8084/files/guestbook-po981205.html)

cases it is not so much the imperative situation itself that is unexpected, but rather the relation between the imperative situation and the situation expressed in the apodosis.

### 3.6.5.2 Character of restriction/ immediate implication

In the following sentences we find examples of conditional imperatives with a restrictive character or a character of immediate implication:

- (196) **Rassvetaj tol'ko, i my poedem.** (Barentsen, p.c.)  
 day.break-IMP-IMPERF only, and we go  
 'As soon as the day breaks, we will go.'
- (197) **Nu skazhi on: treshku platjat. I srazu nevidannaja summa perejdet v ego karman.** (Zoshchenko, 1935)  
 well say-IMP-PERF he: three.ruble they.pay. and immediately unprecedented amount disappears in his pocket  
 'Well, if he says: they pay three rubles, all this money will disappear immediately into his pocket.'

The character of restriction and that of immediate implication are semantically closely related. This can be clarified by the observation of Garde (1963: 210), who notes that the hypothetical conditional imperative often occurs with focus-sensitive and presuppositional particles like *chut'* ('almost') and *tol'ko* ('just'), indicating that the slightest occurrence of a particular situation leads to another situation. In the case of the conditional imperative the hearer naturally expects that more is needed than X to lead to Y, but it is expressed that X immediately leads to Y.

Vasil'eva (1969: 42) suggests that specifications of restriction in conditional sentences with *esli* can be left out if these sentences are paraphrased with imperatives:

- (198) **Esli by tol'ko on ne zadel moego syna, ja by promolchala togda.**  
 if IRR only he not hurt my son, I IRR remained.silent then  
 'If only he had not hurt my son, I would have remained silent then.'
- (199) **Ne zaden' on moego syna, ja by promolchala togda.**  
 not hurt-IMP-PERF he my son, I IRR remained.silent then  
 'If only he had not hurt my son, I would have remained silent then.'

This gives an indication that the feature of restriction is expressed by the imperative itself and cannot solely be attributed to the specifications: because of the special character of the conditional imperative, it is easily combined with restrictive particles.

I think one can motivate the character of restriction as follows. In the case of the optative use in a conditional context the speaker gives an impulse to realize the imperative situation because the realization of the imperative situation is followed by a desirable situation. The directive situation furthermore presupposes that the subject is not already expected to realize the imperative action. In the case of the conditional imperative under discussion, the speaker does not want the realization of the action, but he gives an impulse to the imaginary realization of the imperative action *only* to indicate what the consequences are of the realization of the imperative action; this means that the realization of the imperative action only takes place in an *imaginary world*. This presupposes that the hearer is not expected to know that the realization of the imperative action leads to another situation. In the case of the restrictive interpretation of the conditional imperative the situation described in the protasis (p) leads to the situation described in the apodosis (q), while one would normally expect that p is not enough to lead to q (for q only p is necessary). One can say that in these cases the speaker restricts the domain of actions that could be imagined to a certain single one.

Note that in many cases we do not find the additional specifications of restriction; this is the case for example in the sentences given below:

- (200) Ne **bud'** vy, a drugaja – ni za chto by ne poshel provozhat'. (Zoshchenko, 1935: 9)  
not be-IMP you-NOM-PL, but other-NOM-FEM. never IRR not went accompany  
'If it were not you but another woman, I would never accompany her home.'
- (201) **Bud'** u nas bardaki, tak nikakix ljubovnyx svjazej, lzhi vsej ètoj ne bylo by (...).  
(Amal'rik, 1970: 90)  
be-IMP at us brothels-NOM, so no amorous affairs, lie all that not was IRR (...)  
'If we had brothels, then we wouldn't have any amorous affairs, all those lies wouldn't be there.'
- (202) **Krikni** Zhen'ka 'da', vse by, naverno oboshlos'. (Erofeev, 1993: 37)  
shout-IMP-PERF Zhen'ka-NOM yes, all IRR probably worked.itself.out  
'If Zhenka had shouted "yes", everything would probably have worked itself out.'

These sentences can also, however, be seen as cases of 'immediate implication' or restriction. By using the imperative the speaker underlines that the situation mentioned

in the main clause (which is not the case in this world) could easily be the case or could easily have been the case *if* the imperative situation applied. The conditional imperative therefore has a different character than conditional sentences with *esli* ('if'), where this subjective-modal character is absent. The subjective modal character of the imperative also differs from the subjunctive conditional. I suspect that the subjunctive is used exclusively, or at least foremost, in cases where the speaker wishes the realization of the imperative situation, or where he thinks that the subjunctive situation would be good. The feature of 'breaking the expected course of events' is not expressed by the conditional subjunctive construction. Compare the following two examples of the subjunctive with the imperative:

*With subjunctive*

- (203) **Byl by** Shura na meste Vodily – problem voobchshe ne bylo by. (V. Kunin, *Kysja*)  
 was IRR Shura-NOM on place of.Vodila, problem at.all not was IRR  
 'If only Shura had been in the place of Vodila, there would not have been a problem at all.'
- (204) **Byl by** èto moj rebenok, ja by ej takoe pokazala, chto ona tri dnja sidet' by ne smogla!  
 (V. Kunin, *Russkie na Marienplac*)  
 was IRR that my child-NOM, I IRR her such showed, that she three days sit IRR not could  
 'Had it been my child, I would have given her something, such that she would not have been able to sit for three days.'

*With imperative*

- (205) [In the following extract the author speaks about an illustration in a fairy tale about Pinocchio written by Alexej Tolstoj, where Pinocchio pierces through a fireplace with his nose]:  
**Bud'** ja na meste Alekseja Tolstogo – chego, konečno zhe, byt' ne mozhet, a vse-taki! – ja by uzh pobol'she, chem on, nakrutil vokrug ètogo narisovannogo ochaga.<sup>124</sup> (E. Kljuev, *Mezhdú dvux stul'ev*)  
 be-IMP I-NOM on place of.Alexej Tolstoj, what, of.course PRT, be not may, but nevertheless!, I IRR PRT more, than he, made.up around that drawn fireplace

---

<sup>124</sup> <http://lib.nordnet.ru/lat/PSIHO/klyuew.txt>

If I had been in the place of Alexej Tolstoj – which is, of course, impossible! – I, more than he did, would have made up a story around that drawn fireplace.’

- (206) V ego naruzhnosti byli vse te zhe semejnye cherty (...) golos ego byl ix golosom, no rech’ otlichalas’ takoj ser’eznost’ju i ceremonnost’ju, chto, **bud’** èto moj kuzen Dzhasper, proizvodila by vpechatlenie napyshchennoj i fal’shivoj, u nego zhe, ochevidno, byla estestvennoj i nenarochitoj.<sup>125</sup> (I. Vo, *Vozvrashchenie v Brajdsxed*)  
in his appearance were all these PRT family features (...) voice his was their voice, but language distinguished by such seriousness and ceremoniousness that, be-IMP that my cousin Jasper, created IRR impression of pompous and of false, at him PRT, of course was natural and not ostentatious  
‘In his appearance were the same family features (...), his voice was like their voice, but the way he spoke was characterized by such a seriousness and ceremoniousness, that had he been my cousin Jasper, it would have made a pompous and false impression, but in his case, of course, it was natural and not ostentatious.’

In (203) the speaker expresses that the counterfactual situation where Shura had been in the place of Vodila would have been good, since that would have led to the desirable situation where there would have been no problems. In (204) the speaker expresses that the hypothetical situation where he was the parent of the child would be good, because then the child would have gotten a good beating. In (205) the speaker stresses that in reality the imperative situation cannot occur; this means that the realization of the imperative situation would break the expected course of events. In (206) the speaker does not wish the realization of the imperative situation, but expresses that the hypothetical situation (‘he is my cousin Jasper’) would immediately lead to another situation. This character of immediate restriction is probably not a necessary part of the subjunctive.

### 3.6.5.2 Character of concession

In this subsection I discuss interpretations of the conditional imperative that have a concessive character. It must be noted that these uses differ from the imperative uses that I call ‘concessive use’, which will be discussed in 3.7. The concessive uses under discussion here all have VS order, and do not have a character of performance (which is underlined by the absence of the suffix *-te* in the case of the second person plural). As such, they must be seen as interpretations of the conditional imperative.

---

<sup>125</sup> <http://lib.nordnet.ru/lat/WO/brajdsxed.txt>

In the following sentences the imperative has a so-called scalar concessive character:

- (207) Da **bud'** on xot' princ Amerikanskij – ne podumaju zamuzh za nego idti. (Garde, 1963: 210/ Gor'kij)  
 yes be-IMP he-NOM even prince American – not I.think marry after him go  
 'Even if he were an American prince, I wouldn't think about marrying him.'
- (208) Da **bud'** ja i negrom preklonnyx godov, i to bez unyn'ja i leni, ja russkij by vyuchil tol'ko za to, chto im razgovarival Lenin. (Majakovskij, 1989: 20)  
 yes be-IMP I-NOM and negro of.venerable years, and then without dejection and laziness, I russian IRR learned only for that, that by.him spoke Lenin  
 'Even if I were a negro of old age, I would, without dejection or laziness, learn Russian, just because Lenin spoke it.'

The concessive conditional interpretation occurs in the case of hypothetical condition, as in (207), or in the case of counterfactual condition, as in (208). One can speak of a concessive when the proposition expressed in the main clause contrasts with the expectation that would normally be based on the proposition expressed in the subordinate clause. One can speak of concession if we find the expectation that p will lead to not q, but this relation is denied ( $p \rightarrow q$ ). In most cases we find a negation in the second part of the coordinate clause (as in (207)), but this is not necessarily the case (see (208)). Here there is an expectation that p (he is a negro of old age) will not lead to q (he will learn Russian), but this relation is denied (p leads to q).

In the case of the concessive interpretation of the conditional imperative the imperative normally has a scalar concessive character. This means that of all the situations that may lead to not q, p is the most likely; this relation is, however, negated. In the context the scalar character is often sustained by particles like *xot'* ('even'; particle indicating permission), *i* ('even'), as in the sentences above, and *dazhe* ('even'), as in the sentence below:

- (209) A krome togo, dazhe **napishi** ja èto po-russki, slova èti ne uvideli by sveta dnja pod russkim nebom. Kto b togda prochel ix?<sup>126</sup> (I. Brodskij, *Poltory komnaty*)  
 but besides that, even write-IMP-PERF I these in Russian, words that not saw IRR light of.day under Russian sky. who IRR then read them?  
 'But besides that, even if I had written everything in Russian, my words would not have been published in Russia. Who would then have read them?'

---

<sup>126</sup> [http:// kulichki-lat.rambler.ru/ moshkow/ BRODSKIJ/ rooms.txt](http://kulichki-lat.rambler.ru/moshkow/BRODSKIJ/rooms.txt)

In my opinion, concessive conditional cases have a permissive character. The permissive character of the imperative clause is the result of the interaction between the imperative clause and the contrastive clause that follows it, and is further strengthened by the use of particles like *хот'*. The permissive character means that the speaker gives an impulse to imagine the realization of the imperative action because he presupposes that the addressee 'wants' the imagined realization of this action. This presupposition has a 'rhetorical' character because the speaker does not actually know that the addressee wants p. The speaker supposes that the addressee holds not q to be true under particular circumstances, especially under the presupposition that p is the case, since p is the most likely to lead to not q. In such cases the speaker *permits* the hearer to imagine p, because p leads to q, where there is an expectation that p is the most likely action to lead to not q. In English, sentences like these could be paraphrased as 'Let even X be the case, and still it leads to Y'.

Muravickaja (1973: 54) argues that in some sentences, such as (175) above, one can speak of a mixed concessive-conditional type. In my opinion, this sentence can be said to have a concessive interpretation, because on the basis of p (your own father kills himself) one would expect that not q (you will think that is terrible), but this relation is denied (you don't care). I am not sure whether in this case one has to speak of a mixed conditional-concessive type. I would rather say that this imperative can be interpreted both as a conditional and as a concessive. To decide which type it is we need a particular context. In some cases the context may lead to two interpretations. These interpretations cannot, however, be seen as occurring at the same time, that is, they are discrete. The most important difference between the concessive and the conditional is that in the case of the concessive the imperative predicate has a permissive interpretation, whereas in the case of the hypothetical conditional the emphasis is on the causal relation between the protasis and the apodosis. The imperative predicate cannot be seen as permissive (as in the case of the concessive) or desired (as in the case of the optative), but functions as the marker of conditionality.

The relation between the (restrictive) conditional use and the concessive conditional use of the imperative is thus a matter of a difference in expectation. One can speak of a concessive conditional interpretation if there is an expectation that the imperative action will lead to another opposite action ( $p \rightarrow \text{not } q$ ), because p is *most likely* to lead to not q, but this relation is denied ( $p \rightarrow q$ ). In both the restrictive interpretation and the concessive interpretation the speaker suggests or supposes an action to be true, while there is some presupposition that another action is to be supposed. This means that there is a contrast

between the imperative action and another expected action. Put differently, there is a contrast between SIT (V) and SIT (not V). In the case of the concessive conditional interpretation the addressee is assumed to hold the position that not q is true under particular circumstances, especially if p (=SIT(V) + environment) is the case. The speaker wants to prove the opposite, and acts as if he sacrifices his strongest argument, viz. the addressee is permitted to imagine p to be true, only to show that even p does lead to q. In this case SIT(not V) is expected because p (SIT (V) + environment) is the strongest argument for not q (and the speaker wants to prove that q). In the case of the restrictive conditional interpretation the speaker assumes that the addressee does not expect that the realization of V is enough to lead to the consequent. This expectation is, however, denied: the speaker states that p is enough to lead to q.

### 3.6.6. Conclusion

The conditional imperative use can be defined as follows: 'The speaker hopes to contribute to the realization of the imperative situation ( $\rightarrow$  SIT (V)), only to describe the consequences of this realization; this means that the speaker wants the addressee to imagine the imperative situation'. The conditional imperative can be seen as an extended optative imperative, where the features of direction and wish occur in a weakened form. The weak directive nature of the conditional does, however, account for the so-called modal subjective interpretations of the conditional imperative use.

## 3.7 Concessive use of the imperative

### 3.7.1 Introduction

In this section I will give an analysis of two other concessive uses of the imperative, viz. the concessive use with an interrogative adverb/ adjective and *ni* (so-called 'universal concessive use'), and the concessive use with the particle *˘ot'* ('even'), and a character of performance; this character is underlined by the presence of the suffix *-te* in the case of the second person plural. As I showed in the preceding section, the conditional imperative can also be interpreted as a case of concession. Nevertheless, the concessive use of the conditional differs from the concessive uses under discussion here because these latter uses have a character of performance, which is absent in the case of the former (underlined by the absence of the suffix *-te* in the case of the second person plural). It is

because of the difference in formal and semantic features between these two concessive uses and the conditional imperative use, that I will discuss these two uses or constructions separately.

I will argue that the concessive imperative uses under discussion can be seen as an extension of the directive imperative, where one of the presuppositions of the basic directive imperative, viz. speaker commits himself to wanting or accepting the imperative situation, is changed, and where the context of use is broadened from the directive context to third persons.

The section has the following structure. In 3.7.2 I will discuss the meaning of the concessive construction with *xot'*. In 3.7.3 I will discuss the semantic-syntactic features of this construction. In 3.7.4 I will discuss the meaning of the concessive construction with an interrogative and *ni*, and in 3.7.5 I will discuss the semantic-syntactic features of this construction. Finally, in 3.7.6 I will discuss the relation of these two constructions to the other imperative uses.

### **3.7.2 The meaning of the concessive imperative construction with *xot'***

The following sentences are examples of concessive imperatives with a second person, and a third person respectively:

- (210) Xot' **ubivajte**, ne mozhet. (Vasil'eva, 1969: 43)  
even kill-IMP-IMPERF-2PL, not can  
'You may kill her, but he/ she can't.'
- (211) Nad nim xot' krysha **upadi**, tak on ne poboitsja smerti. (proverb)  
above him even roof fall-IMP-PERF, so he not will.fear death.  
'The roof may even fall on his head, and still he won't fear death.'

The imperative can be used with all persons in the nominative as a concessive in the first clause of a co-ordinate complex. One can speak of a concessive when the proposition expressed in the first clause contrasts with the expectation based on the proposition expressed in the second clause. Concessive uses with *xot'* have a so-called *scalar* concessive character. In the case of scalar concessive use the imperative expresses a situation that can be seen as the situation that is most likely to lead to another situation; this relation of interdependency is, however, denied. The scalar character is expressed by the particle *xot'* together with the concessive context in which it occurs, that is the information contained

in the protasis and the apodosis and the presuppositions concerning their normal relations.

Note that in the preceding section I discussed the scalar concessive use of the conditional imperative. Although both imperative uses have a scalar concessive interpretation, they cannot be seen as identical. The difference between these uses can be illustrated by their different semantic-syntactic features:

*Concessive use of the conditional imperative*

- no occurrence of the suffix *-te* in the case of the second person plural.
- protasis-apodosis / apodosis-protasis order.
- VS order
- particle *xot'* does not modify the imperative.
- prototypically perfective aspect.
- no obligatory expression of *xot'*.

*Concessive use with xot'*

- occurrence of the suffix *-te* in the case of the second person plural.
- prototypically protasis-apodosis order.
- no strict VS order.
- particle *xot'* modifies the verbal phrase.
- prototypically imperfective aspect.
- the particle *xot'* is an obligatory element of the construction.

The features given above are evidence that the concessive use with *xot'* is different from the concessive interpretation of the conditional imperative. More specifically, the former has a character of *performing* the situation, which is absent in the case of the latter, which has an *imaginative* character. Note, however, that in some cases the difference between these two types is not very straightforward. This is the case for example in (211) above. On the basis of formal criteria this cannot be seen as a conditional use because of the VS order is absent. On the other hand, in this case we find the perfective aspect, and the particle *xot'* can be interpreted as modifying the subject of the verb; this sentence is therefore close to a conditional case (*Upadi nad nim xot' krysha, tak on ne poboitsja smerti*; Fall-IMP-PERF on him PRT roof, so he not will.fear death). This example shows that borderline cases may exist between the different usage types. The same can be said about

cases with a second person; such cases are borderline cases between basic directive use of the imperative and concessive use. I will, however, discuss the concessive use separately because of its special semantics and the possibility of third person subjects.

The meaning of the concessive use of the imperative can be formulated as follows:

**The speaker directs (or permits) the subject-addressee (in the case of a second person) or some other subject indirectly (in the case of a third person) to realize the imperative situation: ( $\rightarrow$ SIT ( $V_{+aspect}$ )), only in order to express in another clause that the imagined realization will not lead to the expected consequences.**

In the case of the *scalar* concessive use the expression of the particle *∞ot'* leads to the meaning attribution of the idea of 'even'. The following frame (Figure 3.17) can be used for the concessive imperative:

Figure 3.17

| Force   | Goal                                     | Subject of situation          | Object of force |
|---------|--|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| Speaker | $\rightarrow$ SIT( $V_{+aspect}$ ) $t_1$ | Addressee/ 3sg-pl/ impersonal | Addressee       |

The meaning of the concessive imperative given above presupposes that:

- (i) If S=addressee: the imperative situation is conceived as controllable.
- (ii) The imperative situation breaks the expected course of events.
- (iii) The speaker acts *as if* he commits himself to wanting or accepting the imperative situation.
- (iv) If S=addressee: the addressee is directed to imagine and perform the imperative situation; if S $\neq$ addressee: the addressee is invited to imagine the imperative situation.<sup>127</sup>

As I will argue, the concessive can be seen as a special, playful use of the directive imperative, where the speaker permits the subject to realize the action, only to describe that the hypothetical realization of the action does not lead to the expected consequences. The permissive character of the concessive accounts for the impossibility of combining it with the suffix *-ka*.

<sup>127</sup> As I will explain, this performance has a strong 'as if' character.

The scalar concessive imperative can be paraphrased with the subjunctive, indicative (mostly perfective present, past tense), or infinitive. These moods can all be seen as instantiations of the same scalar concessive construction (see 3.7.6 for examples):

[*xot'* V]<sub>clause</sub> [X]<sub>clause</sub>

where: V= subjunctive, perfective present, past tense, infinitive

The use of the imperative mood in this construction with a third person was still normal in the nineteenth century, and occurred both in idioms and in non-idiomatic expressions, but is archaic in modern Russian; for third person cases the indicative mood is used in this construction. In modern Russian the concessive imperative with *xot'* is used primarily in cases with a second person; such cases often have an idiomatic character. The idiomatic character of this construction may be facilitated by its meaning, viz. the speaker permits the subject to realize the 'extreme' situation expressed by the imperative and *xot'*, only to describe that the hypothetical realization of the action does not lead to the expected consequences. Language has evolved fixed ways to express such 'extreme' situations. The language user can easily draw from this wide range of playful expressions, in order to make his point as effectively as possible.

Before discussing the universal concessive imperative construction, and the relation between the concessive imperative use and the other imperative uses, I will first briefly discuss the semantic-syntactic features of the scalar concessive imperative use.

### 3.7.3 Semantic-syntactic features of concessive use with *xot'*

- (i) + aspect (prototypically imperfective)
- (ii) + all subjects (possibly no first person cases)
- (iii) word order
- (iv) occurrence of suffix *-te*
- (v) co-ordinated protasis-apodosis structure
- (vi) occurrence in embedded cases

I will briefly discuss some of these features below.

### 3.7.3.1 Aspect

The aspect of the scalar concessive use is predominantly imperfective, although perfective cases also occur. Note that the imperfective aspect is typical of permissive directive cases. In the case of permission, it is not the speaker who wants the realization of the situation, but the addressee; the emphasis is therefore not on reaching the endpoint of the situation, but on the fact that the addressee is permitted to *engage* in the situation.

In some cases the same concessive imperative expression may occur with both aspects. Consider the following construction (with a different implied object):

(212) Xot' **ubivajte**, ne mozhet. (Vasil'eva, 1969: 43)  
even kill-IMP-IMPERF-2PL, not can-3SG  
'You may kill her, but she can't.'

(213) [X]ot' **ubej**, ne ponimaju. (Lubensky, 1995/ Vojnovich)  
even kill-IMP-PERF, not understand-1SG  
'You may kill me, I don't understand it.'

### 3.7.3.2 Subject

The scalar concessive imperative occurs with third and second person subjects in the nominative, and with generic agents (cases without subject can be generic or second person cases). According to Garde (1963) the concessive imperative use with *xot'* only occurs with second person singular or plural and with third person singular, implying that it does not occur with the first person: "La proposition à l'impératif s'emploie à la 3e personne du singulier ou à la 2e personne du singulier et du pluriel" (Garde, 1963: 237). I have indeed not attested cases with a first person. It may be that first persons do not occur because of the permissive nature of the use; in the case of a first person the speaker would permit himself to do the imperative situation.<sup>128</sup>

According to Garde (1963: 237) the use of the scalar concessive imperative is, in contrast to the nineteenth century, not productive in modern Russian, but occurs, in the spoken language only, mostly in set expressions, and very infrequently, with a second

---

<sup>128</sup> This restriction does not occur in the case of the other moods/ tenses and in the case of *pust'* ('let'), which can be used in concessive sentences: *Pust' ja neprav, no ty dolzhen menja vyslushat'* (lit. 'Let me be wrong, but you must listen to me').

person plural. The data at my disposal confirm this observation, although the statement that cases with a second person plural only occur in the spoken language is too strong.

### 3.7.3.3 Word order

There is no fixed word order for the scalar concessive use. A restriction on the word order is that the particle *xot'* occurs at a position before the imperative predicate, such that it modifies the verbal phrase. We find the following possibilities:

*xot'* S V  
 X *xot'* S V  
*xot'* V S X

By placing the particle *xot'* before the predicate, the speaker expresses that he acts as if he gives 'permission' to the realization of the imperative predicate.

### 3.7.3.4 Occurrence of *-te*

In the case of the second person plural the suffix *-te* is added to the verb (see (212) above). This suffix is obligatory.

### 3.7.3.5 Sentence structure

The concessive imperative prototypically occurs in the first clause of a co-ordinate structure, while in the second clause a verb in the indicative mood occurs. In some cases, however, the order is reversed:

- (214) Ja ne pomnju ee, *xot' ubej*.<sup>129</sup> (N.Shitova, *Derz'kaja*)  
 I not remember her, even kill-IMP-PERF  
 'I don't remember her, even if you kill me.'

In some cases the second clause, with a verb in the indicative, is introduced with the conjunction *a*:

- (215) *Xot' zarezh'te* menja, a ja vam nichego ne pridumaju. (Xrakovskij & Volodin, 1986: 242)

---

<sup>129</sup> <http://moshkov.aaanet.ru/lat/PROZA/shitowa.txt>

even stab.to.death-IMP-PERF me, but I you-DAT nothing not think.out  
'You may stab me to death, but I can't think of anything for you.'

The conjunction *a* ('but') points at the contrast between the expected consequence of the antecedent and the presented consequence.

### 3.7.3.6 Occurrence of embedded cases

The concessive imperative with *xot'* also occurs in embedded sentences:

- (216) Dozhd' popolam s gradom lupit takoj, chto xot' krichi – nichego ne uslyshish'. (F. Iskander, *Sandro iz Chegema*)  
rain half-and-half with hail barks such, that even shout-IMP-IMPERF – nothing not you.hear  
'The rain together with the hail was making such a noise, that even if you shouted, you couldn't hear anything.'

The occurrence of such cases shows that the speaker does not direct the addressee present in the speech situation to realize the infinitive situation, but that the direction is abstracted from the direct speaker-addressee context.

### 3.7.4 The meaning of the concessive imperative construction with *ni*

Below we find two sentences with generic agents (no expressed subject), one sentence with a second person plural agent, and one with a third person agent respectively:

- (217) Kakuju versiju ni **razvivaj**, ona mozhet byt' legko perebita inoj iz nix. (*Izvestija*, 5-5-1995)  
which version not develop-IMP-IMPERF, she can be easily broken by.another of them  
'No matter which version you develop, it may be easily broken by another one.'
- (218) Kak ni **schitaj**, vse ravno dorogo.<sup>130</sup>  
how not consider-IMP-IMPERF, all.the.same expensive  
'No matter how you look upon it, it is expensive.'
- (219) [D]ja, neshchast'e, kak vy ni **nazyvajte**, ja znaju chto to, chto sluchilos' s vami v Moskve, bylo neshchast'e. (L. Tolstoj, *Vojna i mir*)

---

<sup>130</sup> [http:// lat.www.vladivostok.com/ Golden\\_Horn/ 1999/ 063/ b014.htm](http://lat.www.vladivostok.com/Golden_Horn/1999/063/b014.htm)

yes, misfortune, how you-2PL not name-IMP-IMPERF-PRT, I know that that, what happened with you in Moscow, was misfortune  
 'Yes, a misfortune, whatever you call it, I know that what happened with you in Moscow, was a misfortune.'

- (220) Kuda on ni skryvajsja, on ot menja ne ubezhit. (Mazon, 1914: 69)  
 where he not hide-IMP-IMPERF, he from me not run.away  
 'Wherever he may hide, he won't escape me.'

In these sentences the imperative occurs with interrogative adverbs or pronouns like *kak*, *kuda*, *kto*, *gde*, *čto*, etc. or with interrogative adjectives like *kakoj*, *kotorj* together with the negative particle *ni*. In the literature it is normally assumed that it is not possible to define the meaning of the construction compositionally and that the interrogative together with *ni* must be taken as one semantic unit (Tarlanov, 1982: 43).<sup>131</sup>

The construction under discussion has a so-called *universal* concessive character: it is expressed that q is the case under any circumstance (p), while there is an expectation that there must be a condition for not q to occur. Universal concessive sentences are similar to the scalar concessive sentences discussed above, because both usage types of the imperative have a character of performing the imperative situation. The character of performance is underlined by the occurrence of the suffix *-te* in the case of the second person plural. As such, the meaning given above for the scalar concessive imperative also applies for the universal concessive imperative:

**The speaker directs the subject-addressee (in the case of a second person) or some other subject indirectly (in the case of a third person) to realize the imperative situation: (→SIT (V<sub>+aspect</sub>)), only in order to express in another clause that the imagined realization will not lead to the expected consequences.**

In the case of the *universal* concessive imperative construction the expression of [interrogative + *ni*] leads to the meaning attribution of the idea of 'no matter where, who etc.'. The same frame and presuppositions can be given for the universal concessive use as for the scalar concessive use (Figure 3.18).

---

<sup>131</sup> Note that a sentence like the following is not possible \**On idet kuda ni* ('He goes everywhere.'). This may indicate that (i) the meaning of the construction cannot be compositionally defined, and (ii) the construction may still have an interrogative character.

Figure 3.18

| Force   | Goal                                       | Subject of situation          | Object of force |
|---------|--|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| Speaker | → SIT(V <sub>+aspect</sub> )t <sub>1</sub> | Addressee/ 3sg-pl/ impersonal | Addressee       |

The meaning of the concessive imperative given above presupposes that:

- (i) If S=addressee: the imperative situation is conceived as controllable.
- (ii) The imperative situation breaks the expected course of events.
- (iii) The speaker acts *as if* he commits himself to wanting or accepting the imperative situation.
- (iv) If S=addressee: the addressee is directed to imagine and perform the imperative situation; if S≠addressee: the addressee is invited to imagine the imperative situation.

Like the scalar concessive imperative, the universal concessive imperative can be paraphrased with the subjunctive, indicative, past tense, or infinitive. Such cases can all be seen as instantiations of the same concessive construction.

[Interrogative + [*ni* + V]]<sub>clause</sub> [X]<sub>clause</sub>

where: V=subjunctive, perfect present, past tense, imperative

Note furthermore that the construction [Interrogative + [*ni* + V]]<sub>clause</sub> with moods/ tenses other than the imperative also occurs in non-concessive contexts (see (229) below).

Like in the case of the scalar concessive use, the use of the imperative with third person cases is archaic; in modern Russian the imperative mood mainly occurs with second person cases and with generic cases.

Before discussing the relation between the concessive imperative and the other imperative uses, I will first briefly discuss the semantic-syntactic features of the universal concessive imperative use.

### 3.7.5 Semantic-syntactic features of the universal concessive use with *ni*

- (i) +aspect (prototypically imperfective)
- (ii) +all subjects (possibly no first person cases)

- (iii) word order
- (iv) occurrence of suffix *-te*
- (v) co-ordinated protasis-apodosis structure/ cases without co-ordinated structure
- (vi) occurrence in subordinate clauses

I will briefly discuss some of these features below.

#### 3.7.5.1 Aspect

The aspect of the universal concessive is predominantly imperfective, but perfective cases also occur; compare the following sentences:

- (221) Vperedi – kuda ni **gljan'** – voda, ravnina, ostrova.<sup>132</sup> (J. Mamleev, *Blazhenstvo i okajanstvo*)  
ahead – where not look-IMP-PERF – water, plain, islands  
'Ahead of us, wherever you look, there is water, plains, and islands.'
- (222) V kakuyu storonu ni **gljadi**, vvxoda net.<sup>133</sup> (A. Azol'skij, *Stepan Sergeich*)  
in which side not look-IMP-IMPERF, escape not  
'No matter in which direction you look, there is no way out.'

The occurrence of the imperfective aspect in most cases can be motivated in the same way as the occurrence of the imperfective aspect in the case of the scalar concessive use (see 3.7.2).

#### 3.7.5.2 Subject

The universal concessive can occur with subjects in the third and the second person and with generic agents. I have not attested clear first person cases, but in the following sentence a first person plural is implied:

- (223) (...) Sram-to byvaet u bogatyx, a my, kak ni **zhivi**, nikomu do ètogo dela net. (Barentsen, p.c./ Ostrovskij)  
shame-PRT is at rich.people, but we, how not live-IMP-IMPERF, to.no.one till that  
business not

---

<sup>132</sup> <http://www.rvb.ru:8090/mamleev/01prose/2stories/4folk/01-2-4-04.htm>

<sup>133</sup> <http://www.bryansk.ru/moshkow/lat/AZOLXSKIJ/stepan.txt>

'The rich people know what shame is, but in us, no matter how we live, no-one is interested.'

The concessive use under discussion also occurs with non-animate subjects as in the following sentence with the verb *sluchits'ja* ('happen'):

- (224) No – chto ni sluchis'! – Prodolzhaetsja zhizn'.<sup>134</sup> (Songtext A. Pugacheva)  
but – what not happen-IMP-PERF! – goes.on life  
'But no matter what happens, life goes on.'

The tendency for modern Russian to use the imperative in the universal concessive construction only when the subject is a second person or a generic agent can also be perceived for the universal concessive; for example:

- (225) Samolet, kak ni starajsja, ne uderzhish' v vozduxe dol'she neskol'kix chasov.<sup>135</sup> (R. Bax, *Most cherez vechnost'*)  
plane, how not try-IMP-IMPERF, not keep-2SG in air longer some hours  
'No matter how you try, you won't keep a plane in the air for more than some hours.'

Garde argues that the concessive imperative (including the universal concessive) figures almost exclusively in set expressions.

“Les propositions concessives au conditionnel et à l'impératif sont en régression dans l'ensemble de la langue, excepté des survivances isolées dans certaines expressions toutes faites.” (Garde, 1963: 248)

The data at my disposal confirm this observation, although it must be remarked that sentences with generic agents or second persons probably occur more frequently than cases with third persons.<sup>136</sup>

---

<sup>134</sup> <http://lat.online.stack.net/~turkin/pugach/alb2/37.htm>

<sup>135</sup> <http://moshkow.donetsk.ua/lat/RBACH/bach04.txt>

<sup>136</sup> The opinion that the concessive imperative is declining in modern Russian seems, at least for the universal imperative, to be supported by the findings of Osipova (1992), who discusses the concessive with *ni*. The examples of universal concessive imperatives she gives from the twentieth century are mostly set expressions or cases with a generic subject. I do not, however, agree with all Garde's observations. Garde (1963: 245) notes for example that the universal construction with *ni* never occurs with the verb *byt'*. I think this statement is too strong. In some texts, and probably confined to specific genres, cases with *byt'* even occur relatively frequently (e.g. in O. Platonov, *Zhizn' za Carja*, a text with about 110,000 words, the

## 3.7.5.3 Word order

In the case of the universal concessive imperative we find the following structure:

[Interrogative S *ni* V<sub>imperative imperfective/ perfective</sub> X] [(a) V<sub>indicative</sub>]

where X is S, or another constituent

The interrogative takes the first position in the clause and is followed by the subject (if expressed) and the imperative. The particle *ni* is always placed before the imperative. In most cases we find an [Interrogative S *ni* V] order, although other orders occur, as below where the subject of the clause occurs at the end of the clause:

- (226) Kakov ni **bud'** grozen den', a vecher nastanet. (Osipova, 1992/ proverb)  
 how not be-IMP terrible day, but evening comes  
 'No matter how terrible the day may be, the evening will come.'

3.7.5.4. Occurrence of the suffix *-te*

In the case of the second person plural the suffix *-te* is added to the verb (see (219) above). This suffix is obligatory.

## 3.7.5.5 Sentence structure

The universal concessive imperative prototypically occurs in the first clause of a coordinate structure. In some cases the order is reversed:

- (227) Ja lezhal na gl'adkoj tverdoj, odnako neskol'ko iskrivlennoj poverxnosti. Ja ne byl svjazan, no signaly ot mozga ne proxodili k konečnostjam, kak ni **starajsja**.<sup>137</sup> (A. Tjurin, *V'ooruzhennoe vosstanie z'ivotnyx*)  
 (...) I not was tied.up. but signals from brain not come.through to limbs, how not try-IMP-IMPERF

---

imperative of *byt'* was distributed as follows: 9 directive cases, 8 concessive cases with *ni*, 5 conditional cases, and 2 optative cases).

<sup>137</sup> <http://www.moshkow.pp.ru:5000/lat/TYURIN/annev.txt>

'I was lying down on an even, hard, but somehow bent surface. I wasn't tied up, but the signals from my brain did not reach my limbs, whatever one tried.'

In some cases the second clause, with a verb in the indicative, is introduced with the conjunction *a*:

- (228) Kak ni **kolotis'**, a bez brani ne zhit'e. (Tarlanov, 1982: 44/ proverb)  
how not beat, but without swearing not life  
'No matter how you beat me up, there is no life without swearing.'

The conjunction *a* ('but') points at the contrast between the expected consequence of the antecedent and the presented consequence.

Some clauses with a universal concessive character do not occur in a coordinate structure, e.g.:

- (229) Sjad' vozle dverej, i ne zabud' podat' komandu 'Vstat', Smirno', esli kakaja ni **bud'** rozha iz oficerov nadumaet sjudu sunut'sja.<sup>138</sup> (Veles i Kompanij, *Nevoennaja xronika soldatskoj služby*)  
sit-IMP next.to doors, and not forget-IMP give command 'Stand-INF, ... at attention', if which-F-SG-NOM not be-IMP bastard from officers decides here to.interfere.with  
'Sit down next to the doors, and don't forget to give the command "Stand ... at attention", if one of those bloody officers decides to interfere.'

In this sentence the imperative clause can be seen as a modification to the noun phrase. The form *kakoj-nibud'* ('some') is highly grammaticalized in Russian. In this sentence, however, the particle *ni* and the imperative are not contracted into one word, which points at the compositional status of the construction. Compare this with the following case with a normal occurrence of *kakaja-nibud'*:

- (230) Chto zh on, ptica **kakaja-nibud'**, chtoby pet', da eshche posle smerti?<sup>139</sup> (J. Mamleev, *Sluchaj v mogile*)  
what PRT he, bird some, in.order sing, yes still after death  
'What is he, some kind of bird, that he still sings after his death.'

---

<sup>138</sup> <http://www.litera.ru:8085/slova/veles/veles1.htm>

<sup>139</sup> <http://www.rvb.ru:8090/mamleev/01prose/2stories/5end/01-2-5-13.htm>

## 3.7.5.6 Occurrence of embedded cases

The universal concessive imperative prototypically occurs in the first clause of a coordinated structure. In the following sentence, however, the imperative occurs in a subordinate clause:

- (231) Bukashki bystro polzli v nashu storonu. Ix processija javno napominala boevoj porjadok, i ja ponjal, chto, kak ni starajsja, nevozmozhno izbezhat' vstrechi.<sup>140</sup> (K. Sajmak, *Rokovaja kukla*)  
 insects quickly crawled in our direction. their procession clearly reminded of war order, and I understood, that what not try-IMP-IMPERF, impossible avoid meeting  
 'The insects crawled up in our direction. Their procession looked like soldiers marching, and I understood that, no matter how one tried, it would be impossible to avoid them.'

Such sentences show, in my opinion, that the expression *kak ni starajsja* is idiomaticized, such that the basic directive meaning is weakened.

## 3.7.6 The concessive imperative construction and the other imperative uses

In the literature it is assumed that the concessive use of the imperative can be seen as a case of 'permission'. This opinion is expressed for example by Ebeling (1956: 87), who argues that in the case of the concessive imperative use, the speaker gives permission to the hearer to suppose a certain act. In my opinion this analysis of the concessive imperative is right, but incomplete on two points. Firstly, it is necessary to state explicitly *why* one can speak of permission in the case of the concessive use; and secondly, Ebeling's description does not differentiate between the concessive uses under discussion, and conditional concessive cases as discussed in 3.6.5. As I explained above, these latter cases have a different semantic character, which is underlined by the different word order, the different placement of *not'*, and most importantly, the fact that the directive plural suffix *-te* does not occur in these sentences.

Isachenko (1957: 11) emphasizes the diachronic relation between directive cases and concessive cases. He expresses this opinion in the following fragment:

---

<sup>140</sup> <http://kulichki-lat.rambler.ru/moshkow/SIMAK/destdoll.txt>

“The use of the imperative form in concessive constructions like *Kak ty tam ni keruti, chto ty tam ni govori, ja tebe vse ravno ne poverju*, can be seen as a transposition of the [directive] imperative. Such constructions in modern language occurred from the combination of two independent sentences, that is the exclamation (*Govori chto ugodno! Govori chto sochesh’!*) [‘Say what you want’] and the statement (*Ja tebe ne poverju*) [‘I won’t believe you.’] (Isachenko, 1957: 11)<sup>141</sup>

In my opinion concessive cases with a second person can indeed be seen as a special instance of the directive use of the imperative. This can be illustrated with the sentence given by Isachenko with a second person singular:

- (232) Chto ty tam ni **govori**, ja tebe vse ravno ne poverju.  
what you there not say-IMP-IMPERF, I you all.the same not will.believe  
‘No matter what you say, I won’t believe you.’

In this sentence the speaker assumes that the addressee-subject holds that under particular circumstances not q (I will believe you) is the case. By directing the addressee to perform the imperative action (‘say whatever you want’), the speaker acts *as if* he agrees with accepting or permitting the addressee to prove that not q will be the case, by assuming that the addressee wants to make his point that under particular circumstances not q is the case. The speaker can direct the addressee to realize the imperative situation, since he assumes that q (‘I will not believe you’) will be the case anyway.

Note that in many cases it is clear that the speaker does not actually expect the addressee to give in to the impulse to realize the imperative situation. This is especially evident with the construction with *soč’*, as in (213) with the verb *ubit’*, where the occurrence of the imperative situation is presented as the most extreme possible situation relative to the given context. Cases like these underline that the concessive is primarily a rhetorical device to prove that q (=situation mentioned in the clause cooccurring with the imperative clause) is the case, rather than a form that is used to manipulate the actual behaviour of agents.

The directive performative nature of the concessive is underlined by the occurrence of the directive suffix *-te* in the case of the second person plural. In the case of a third person and in the case of generic agents, however, such an analysis does not apply.

---

<sup>141</sup> “Transpoziciej imperativa sleduet priznat’ upotreblenie ètoj formy v ustupitel’nyx predlozhenijax tipa *Kak ty tam ni keruti, chto ty tam ni govori, ja tebe vse ravno ne poverju*. Podobnye konstrukcii sovremennogo jazyka voznikli iz sochetanija dvux samostojatel’nyx predlozhenij vosklicatel’nogo (*Govori chto ugodno! Govori chto sochesh’!*) i povestvovatel’nogo (*Ja tebe ne poverju*)” (Isachenko, 1957: 11).

Generic cases can be seen as intermediate between third person cases and second person cases. In the case of third persons, the speaker gives an impulse to the realization of the situation by the agent, which is not present in the speech situation. Such cases are closer to hortative-optative cases, so one can speak here of indirect direction. By uttering the imperative the speaker intends to contribute to the realization of the imperative situation that is not present in the speech situation. Cases with third persons can be seen as extensions of the concessive directive imperative by broadening of context of use. The occurrence of such cases is probably facilitated by the occurrence of other imperative uses with third persons, especially the optative imperative use.

Finally I will say a few words about the oppositional forms of the concessive imperative. As I remarked earlier, the concessive construction with *skol'* and *ni* can occur in different moods and tenses, viz. the present, past tense, subjunctive, and the infinitive. Below we find the same expression with the verb *starat'sja* ('try', 'do your best', 'make an effort') in different moods/ tenses:

*skol'ko + ni + infinitive*

- (233) Skol'ko ni starat'sja/ Stanu udaljat'sja/ Zhizn'ju naslzhda-a-at'sja/ I v stolice zhit'! (...). (F. Dostoevskij, *Brat'ja Karamazovy, Kniga Pjatatja*)  
 how.much not try-INF-IMPERF/ I.will.start go.away/ with.life enjoy/ and in capital live-INF-IMPERF  
 'No matter how much it takes/ I want to get away/ Enjoy life / And live in the capital.'

*kak + S + ni + past tense*

- (234) Kak on ni staralsja vtolkovat' im, oni nichego ne ponjali, a mozhet byt', nichemu ne poverili.<sup>142</sup> (A. & B. Strugackij, *Ulitka na sklone*)  
 how he not tried to.explain them, they nothing not understood, and may be, nothing not believed  
 'No matter how he tried to teach them something, they didn't understand anything, and perhaps believed nothing.'

---

<sup>142</sup> <http://lib.novgorod.net/lat/STRUGACKIE/bespokoj.txt>

*The Russian imperative*

*kak + S + ni + present*

- (235) Zadacha učenika – otrazit' udar čem pridetsja. Uzh kak on ni naprjagaetsja, kak ni staraetsja ugadat' otkuda budet vpad, vse zrja.<sup>143</sup>  
task of.student – parry blow with.what will.come.at.hand. PRT how he not exerts.oneself, how not tries guess from.where will.be attack, all for.nothing  
'The task of a student is to parry the blow coming at him using whatever he can. No matter how he exerts himself, and tries to guess from which direction the attack will come, it's all for nothing.'

*kak + by + ni + past tense*

- (236) Čelovek, kak by ni staralsja byt' Bogu vernym vo vsech pravilax, ne ustoit pered iskushenijem, dazhe, esli by on pretendoval v ètom na Bozh'ju pomoshch'.<sup>144</sup>  
man, how IRR not try be to.God faithful in all rules, not will.resist before temptation, even if IRR he claims in that on God help  
'Man, no matter how he might try to be faithful to God according to all the rules, will not be able to resist temptation, even if he sought for God's help God.'

*kak + imperative*

- (237) Samolet, kak ni staraetsja, ne uderzhish' v vozduxe dol'she neskol'kix časov.<sup>145</sup> (R. Bax, *Most čerez vječnost'*)  
plane, how not try-IMP-IMPERF, not keep-2SG in air longer some hours  
'No matter how hard you try, you won't keep a plane in the air for more than a few hours.'

Above we find the *ni* construction with the lexical verb *starat'sja* ('try') and the pronoun *kak* (except in (233), where the pronoun *skol'ko* ('how much') occurs), with the infinitive, past tense, present tense, subjunctive and the imperative. It should be noted here that the extracts are from different types of text, and that the first extract is from the nineteenth century, in contrast to the others, which are from the twentieth century. Such facts are important, since instances of the construction with particular moods/tenses may be archaic (such as the use of the imperative, especially with third persons), while other moods or tenses may be confined to particular styles (e.g. Garde, 1963: 245) argues that in

---

<sup>143</sup> <http://www.anekdot.ru:8084/d66.html>

<sup>144</sup> <http://lib.ru/lat/HRISTIAN/prospect.txt>

<sup>145</sup> <http://moshkow.donetsk.ua/lat/RBACH/bach04.txt>

modern Russian the perfective present is used in the spoken language, whereas the subjunctive is used in the written language.). The restriction to particular styles and periods indicates that the different moods/ tenses of the construction cannot strictly be seen as oppositional forms; put differently, *if* there is a possibility of choice between different particular moods/ tenses, this choice is based not only on purely semantic grounds, but also on register and style. Furthermore, in the case of this construction the question of (the level of) idiomaticity plays an important part (cf. Garde, 1963). It may be that some instances of the construction (in particular with the imperative mood as in (237)) have a higher degree of idiomaticity than others. This suggests that the use and distribution of the construction cannot solely be attributed to the meaning of the particular moods/ tenses.

Leaving aside the factors mentioned, it seems that the differences between the different moods/ tenses are connected with the meanings of these different moods. The imperative is used in those cases where the agent is generic, and where the speaker gives an impulse to the addressee (and anyone like him in the same situation) to imagine the imperative action. This means that in the case of the imperative (i) there is more speaker-addressee involvement than in the case of the other uses, (ii) the construction itself does not express the relation between the scene and some specific moment in time (as in the case of the indicative and the past tense), and (iii) there is no agreement between the agent of the verb and some specific agent (as in the case of the indicative and the past tense).<sup>146</sup> The speaker-addressee involvement resulting from the directive nature of the construction with the imperative means that this construction is more lively and expressive than instances with other moods/ tenses. Furthermore, it implies that the idea of 'breaking the expected course of events' is more clearly expressed in the case of the imperative than in that of the other moods/ tenses. This means that in the case of the imperative the speaker assumes that the *addressee* holds that there must be some way of trying such that not *q* will be the case; this relation of interdependency is, however, denied. The difference between the imperative and other moods can further be illustrated with the following sentence with a perfective present, where the construction *čto + ni + V* does not occur in a coordinated concessive context:

- (238) Vse, čto on ni **skazhet**, dolžno vosprinimat'sja liš' kak ego ličnoe mnenie, a ne kak prikaz ot moego imeni ili ot imeni Legiona.<sup>147</sup> (R. Asprin, *Štutovskaja rota*)

<sup>146</sup> An exception could be made for cases with *-te*.

<sup>147</sup> [http://lib.nordnet.ru/lat/ASPRIN/phule\\_1.txt](http://lib.nordnet.ru/lat/ASPRIN/phule_1.txt)

all, that he not says-PRES-PERF, must be taken only as his personal opinion, and not as order from my name or from name of Legion  
'Everything that he says should be taken as his own personal opinion, and not as an order on behalf of me, or on behalf of the Legion.'

If we compare this sentence to (237) – a similar construction with an imperative – we see some important differences, viz. in (238) (i) the construction with *ni* does not occur in a co-ordinated concessive structure, (ii) the verb is perfective, and (iii) the subject is a third person. In contrast to (237), in (238) the idea of challenging the subject ('I don't care what the subject does') is absent. In this sentence the construction is only used to refer to any future instance of the subject performing the situation expressed by the verb. It is precisely the feature of 'just go ahead, I don't care anyway because I know that it doesn't make any difference' that is typical of the imperative in the concessive construction, and not of the other moods and tenses in the concessive construction.

In my opinion, a similar analysis accounts for the imperative cases with a third person, and for concessive imperative cases with *кот'*. The idea of breaking the expected course of events is absent in the case of the other moods. In the case of the past tense, subjunctive, or perfective present no such assumption is made; it is only expressed that the subject in question tried/ would or could try/ will try different things, but that this does not lead to not q. The idea of breaking the expected course of events is also absent in the case of the infinitive in (233); this sentence has a necessitive nuance ('it does not matter how much effort one *has* to make').

### 3.7.7 Conclusion

I have argued that the concessive imperative construction with *ni* or *кот'* can be seen as an extension of the directive imperative where one of the presuppositions of the basic directive imperative, viz. speaker commits himself to wanting or accepting the imperative situation, is changed, and where the context of use is broadened from the directive context to generic cases, impersonal cases and third persons. In modern Russian third person cases are no longer productively used.

## 3.8 Conclusion and further remarks

In this chapter I have given an analysis of the Russian imperative. The aim of the analysis was to give an overview of the different uses of the imperative, to show how these uses

are related to one another, to account for different semantic-syntactic features of the imperative, and to show how the imperative differs from oppositional forms.

I have argued that the Russian imperative can best be seen as a complex of interrelated uses with a basic meaning. The basic imperative meaning can be defined as shown in Figure 3.19, where the meaning of  $V_{IMP}$  can be seen as the circumstances under which  $V_{IMP}$  may be uttered.

Figure 3.19

---

*Definition of the meaning of basic 'V<sub>IMPERATIVE</sub>'*

By using the imperative the speaker expresses that he gives an impulse directed at the realization of 'V' ( $\rightarrow$  SIT (V)); by S, if S is expressed or given in the context; this presupposes that:

- (i) 'not V' is given (that is, V is a future situation)
- (ii) there is a contrast of expectation between 'V' and 'not V' (because otherwise no impulse would have to be given to realize 'V'); put differently, 'V' breaks the expected course of events.

The notion of impulse can be understood as follows: by uttering the imperative, the speaker intends to contribute to the realization of the imperative action, because the addressee (which may be expressed by the subject of the imperative predicate, or in the case of the optative imperative use, by some other entity) can follow the direction by contributing to the realization of 'V'.

---

The basic meaning given here can be seen as an abstraction from the directive uses and the hortative-optative uses. These uses have basic uses themselves, and extensions from these basic uses by the process of selecting, and in the case of the narrative imperative, possibly cancelling features under perspectives provided by contexts. The process of extension by feature selection occurs in different degrees (corresponding to the number of selected features), such that some instances of the imperative can be seen as borderline cases between different uses. The different uses should therefore be seen as *usage types*.

The different usage types correspond to *context types*. To decide which different uses can be distinguished I have looked at both semantic criteria and formal criteria. In the following scheme an overview is given of some of the relevant formal features of the different imperative uses. These are the occurrence of a subject (S), the occurrence of the

directive suffix *-te* in the case of an expressed or implied second person plural subject, the occurrence of embedded imperatives (*chto* V), the occurrence of the directive particle *-ka*, the occurrence of a set word order (WO), the aspect of the imperative, the occurrence of the particle *by* and the occurrence of the imperative in a co-ordinate complex, and the order of the clauses within this complex. If a particular feature is attested I have indicated this with a +, if it is a necessary feature, I have expressed this with N. An overview of different imperative uses and the linguistic context types of these uses is given in Table 3.2.

The different linguistic features give indication of the following usage types:

- S: gives information about the directive or non-directive context of use; identification of directive versus non-directive uses
- *-te* : necessary with second person plural directive variants; identification of directive versus non-directive uses
- *-ka*: possible with non-permissive hortative-directive variants; partial identification of directive/ hortative versus non-directive/ hortative uses
- *chto*: not possible in the case of basic directive/ hortative cases
- WO: VS order is obligatory in the case of the optative use and conditional use; identification of hortative (optative, conditional) use
- aspect: the narrative imperative is obligatorily perfective; identification of narrative imperative
- *by*: can be expressed with the optative and counterfactual conditional; identification of the abstraction from the basic hortative use
- coordinate complex: identification of conditional-concessive uses
- clause order: an apodosis-protasis order is not possible in the case of the conditional directive and conditional optative interpretation; identification of the abstraction from the basic directive-hortative context

As I argued, the imperative can be used in different ways, such that different *functions* of the basic meaning can be defined. Different functions of the imperative constitute different usage types. The different imperative usage types and the relations between them are given in Figure 3.20.

In Figure 3.20 the lines represent semantic relations between the uses as described in the preceding sections. The arrows point at hierarchical relations that exist between uses. They represent semantic transfers. If use B is a transferred case of use A, there is a

hierarchical relation between A and B in the sense that B can be transferred from A, and not A from B.

Table 3.2

| Uses*                 | S   | <i>te</i>        | <i>cbto</i> | V | <i>ka</i> | WO                                | aspect         | <i>by</i> | co-complex       | CI-order     |
|-----------------------|---|------------------|-------------|---|-----------|-----------------------------------|----------------|-----------|------------------|--------------|
| DIR                   | 2sg/ pl, Ø=<br>addressee<br>or generic                              | N                |             |   | +         | V, SV<br>VS                       | perf,<br>impf  |           | +                | A-P          |
| NEC                   | 123sg/ pl,<br>Ø= generic<br>or impers, 2<br>= speaker               |                  | +           |   |           | SV, (VS)                          | impf<br>(perf) |           |                  |              |
| NAR                   | 123sg/ pl<br>imp, Ø=<br>impers.                                     |                  | +           |   |           | SV, (VS)                          | perf           |           |                  |              |
| OPT                   | 123sg/ pl<br>imp, Ø=<br>impers.                                     | + <sup>148</sup> |             | + |           | VS <sup>149</sup>                 | perf<br>(impf) | +         | +                | A-P          |
| COND                  | 123sg/ pl<br>imp, Ø=<br>impers.                                     |                  | +           | + |           | VS                                | perf<br>(impf) | +         | N                | Both         |
| CONC<br>+ <i>ni</i>   | 2,3sg/ pl <sup>150</sup><br>Ø= generic,<br>(impers.) <sup>152</sup> | N                | +           |   |           | Interr S<br><i>ni</i> V X<br>(=S) | impf<br>(perf) |           | N <sup>151</sup> | A-P<br>(P-A) |
| CONC<br>+ <i>ʔot'</i> | 2,3sg/ pl<br>Ø= generic,<br>(impers.)                               | +                | +           |   |           | <i>ʔot'</i> -V                    | impf<br>(perf) |           | N                | A-P<br>(P-A) |

\* DIR=directive, NEC=necessitive, NAR=narrative, OPT=optative, COND=conditional, CONC=

<sup>148</sup> Cases with *-te* could equally be seen as directive cases.

<sup>149</sup> With a few exceptions.

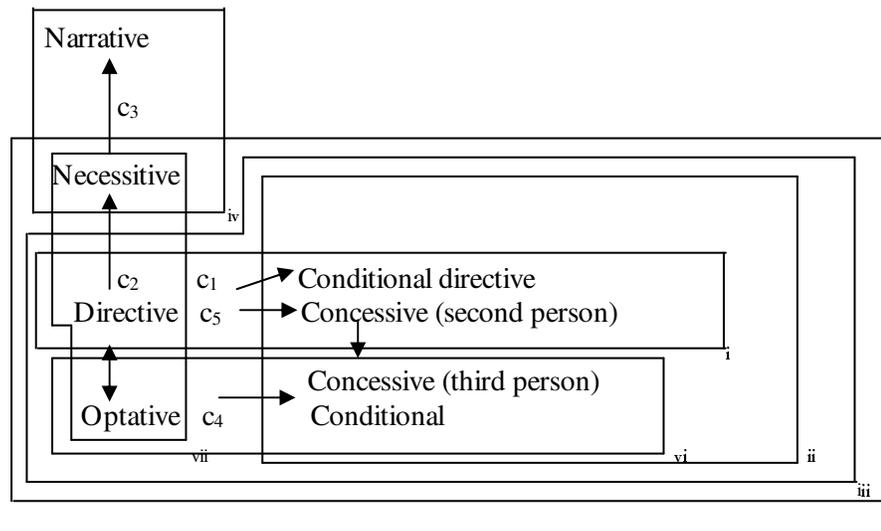
<sup>150</sup> Although I have not attested first person singular cases, I suspect that such uses are also possible.

<sup>151</sup> There seem to be a few exceptions here (see (229)).

<sup>152</sup> I have not attested concessive impersonal uses (with *ni* or *ʔot'*), but I suspect such uses are possible.

concessive, A=apodosis, P=protasis, WO=word order, S=subject, V=verb, +=possible, N=necessary.

Figure 3.20



- (i) Directive uses
- (ii) Conditional uses
- (iii) The speaker is the giver of the impulse
- (iv) The impulse giver is not the speaker
- (v) Uses where there is an identifiable impulse giver<sup>153</sup>
- (vi) Hortative uses (the speaker directs the subject indirectly)
- (vii) Uses where the impulse is aimed at the actual performance of the situation

Contexts (c) are given that are relevant for the semantic extensions:

- c<sub>1</sub> = The imperative occurs in a coordinate complex; the subject of the imperative can be equated with the generic addressee
- c<sub>2</sub> = The subject is a first or third person, a force other than the speaker is given or understood from the context

<sup>153</sup> In the case of the necessitive there is a clear force, but the identity may be less identifiable.

- c<sub>3</sub>= The aspect of the verb is perfective; the imperative action is embedded in the narration; no force is given or understood from the context (although one may perhaps still speak of fate)
- c<sub>4</sub>= The verb occurs in a coordinate complex; there is no feature [+wish]; there is a possibility of placing 'V' in a counterfactual world (+ *by*)
- c<sub>5</sub>= The imperative occurs in a coordinate complex; introduced with universal interrogative adverb + *ni*, or *ʔot*'
- 

This means that an abstraction from both use A and use B would result in loss of information, and that the meaning of use B can only be explained in terms of its relation to A (B is understood in terms of A).

The creation of the polysemous complex is the result of applying the imperative in a new context of use, whereby the meaning of the new use can be understood only on the basis of the interaction between the basic meaning and the new context. In some cases the relation between the original use and the new use is no longer transparent, for example in the case of the relation between instances with the feature 'non-subject force' and the narrative; this can probably be seen as a case of cancelling features. As I have explained in my analysis, the process of understanding requires knowledge of general pragmatic-cognitive principles. As such, the different uses can be seen as interpretations with an independent status. They can be seen as interpretations, because they can only be understood on the basis of the basic meaning, but they can be seen as independent uses, because different uses can be defined on the basis of clear examples. In the case of some uses, more specifically the narrative, the independent status is even stronger, as there are no borderline cases exist between the narrative and other imperative uses.

The specific relations between the different uses can further be described in the following way:

- |                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| <b>A<sub>1</sub>:</b>  | <b>Prototypical directive use</b>   |
| Main features:         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Force: speaker</li> <li>2. Goal: → SIT(V)</li> <li>3. Subject situation: addressee</li> <li>4. Object force: addressee</li> </ol> |
| <b>B. Necessitive:</b> | Extension of A <sub>1</sub> by change of perspective (embedding)  |

select 2, modify 1: force other than speaker to get SIT(V) done,  
modify 3, 4: subject situation to 1,3sg/ pl and impersonal, object  
force is subject situation:

1. Force: non-speaker
2. Goal: →SIT(V)
3. Subject situation: 1-3sg/ pl, impersonal
4. Object force: subject situation

**C. Narrative:** Modification or weakening of **B**  
modify 2 by adding presupposition of unexpected nature SIT(V);  
possibly cancelling 1, or weakening 1 (force is 'fate')

**D. Concessive:** Modification of **A<sub>1</sub>** by (i) changing precondition, and (ii) broadening  
context  
(a) select all, modify 2: the speaker acts *as if* he wants the addressee to  
perform V, (b) modify 3, 4, such that subject situation = third person  
(broadening context of use), and object of force is addressee

**A<sub>2</sub>: Prototypical hortative-optative use**

Main features: 

1. Force: speaker
2. Goal: → SIT(V)
3. Subject situation: 1,2,3sg/ pl, impersonal
4. Object force: addressee (hearer, non-specified phenomenon)

**B<sub>2</sub>: Conditional use** Modification of **A<sub>2</sub>** by 'rhetorical' reasoning (weakening feature of  
performance)  
modify 2, only hypothetical performance (*as if* performance)

In many cases the idea of extension can be interpreted synchronically. This is the case  
for example with the necessitive imperative, which can be understood on the basis of  
the directive imperative. In other cases the notion of extension must be interpreted  
diachronically. This is the case for example with the conditional imperative, which can  
be seen as an extension of the optative imperative. In contemporary Russian, however,  
the optative imperative is not productive. Nevertheless, in modern Russian the  
imperative is still productively used as a conditional with third and first persons. In my

opinion, the conditional use must be seen as a remnant of an extended optative imperative, which has survived independently. This means that the conditional imperative can only be analyzed *diachronically* as an extension of the optative use. The fact that the conditional imperative is still productively used in modern Russian points to the fact that it can be seen as a use with an independent status: If the conditional imperative could only be interpreted on the basis of the optative imperative, the loss of the optative imperative would lead to a loss or at least a change of the conditional imperative. In my opinion, the 'survival' of the conditional is probably made possible by the fact that it shares important features with directive uses, or directive-based uses (such as the necessitive). The different directive uses, and the conditional use, which can be seen as a hortative use in a weakened form, can all be seen as instances of the basic directive-hortative imperative meaning.

It could be argued that the loss of the optative imperative means that the basic meaning of the imperative given above could be undergoing a change, restricting the use of the imperative to directive contexts, or contexts that can be derived from directive use, such as the necessitive. Such a phenomenon may possibly be perceived in the case of the concessive use, which seems to be restricted to second persons in modern Russian, in contrast to earlier stages where the concessive also occurred with third persons. The occurrence of the conditional, however, points to the fact that the basic meaning of the imperative must still take (semi-)hortative variants into account. In the synchronic system, however, the directive use has a more central status than other uses, such as the narrative and the conditional. The present central status of the Russian directive imperative may be an important factor in future changes in the imperative system.

Although it is not possible to give a necessary and sufficient definition for all the uses of the imperative, it is possible to abstract from the uses on different levels. On the highest abstractional level we find the unexpected realization of the imperative situation, which is typical of all the imperative uses, and can therefore be seen as a necessary condition. The imperative is always linked to the idea of contrast of expectation between situations: there is always a contrast between the imperative situation (SIT(V)) and the situation expected of the agent (SIT(not V)); because of the contrast the imperative often has a so-called modal subjective character.

On a lower abstractional level we find that the idea of contrast is the result of the non-agent or foreign impulse: the impulse leads to a change of situation, and a contrast between the imperative action and the expected action of the agent. This foreign impulse may be the speaker or another force and the performer/ agent of the action may be the

hearer or an entity not present in the speaker-addressee context. In the case of the highest abstraction, exemplified by the narrative, we find that the idea of change of situation and the resulting contrast between the imperative action and the expected action of the agent appear independently of the foreign impulse, although it may be that in the case of the narrative 'fate' can be identified with the foreign impulse.

The directive-hortative character of the imperative accounts for the absence of tense and agreement features. The aspect of the imperative gives information about the internal structure of the action, and can be perfective or imperfective. The imperative expresses an action, event, or state and can evoke the thought of an agent or the carrier of an event or state. The subject of the imperative is expressed in the nominative case. It is not expressed in the case of a generic agent and is often not expressed if it is clear from the context, as in the case of the directive use. A dative subject occurs in some necessitive uses and, according to the general rule in Russian, with impersonal verbs. The word order for the imperative clause follows the general principles of word order in Russian. In the case of the optative use and conditional use, however, we find a fixed VS order. The clause initial position of the imperative verb is connected with the 'background' status of the verb.

The highest abstraction described above, or the basic imperative meaning cannot be seen as the meaning of the imperative. However, it does not include the use of the oppositional forms of the imperative (e.g. directive use of the infinitive, necessitive use with *dolzhen*, conditional sentences with *esli* etc.). This may be connected with the borders of the polysemous complex: the polysemous complex can only be extended if the new highest abstraction does not capture oppositional use. This means that in the polysemous complex a particular given imperative use shows more similarity to the other imperative uses, more particular to the basic imperative use, than to an oppositional form.<sup>154</sup>

A few words should be said about the question of polysemy versus monosemy. In my opinion both frameworks point at important aspects of the meaning of the imperative. Important aspects of the different approaches are given below:

*Important aspects of the monosemous approach*

- (i) The idea of direction (or foreign impulse) is a feature of every use, or is necessary to understand every use.
- (ii) Many instances of the imperative can be seen as borderline cases between different usage types.

---

<sup>154</sup> This is in contrast to the level of *function*, where uses show more similarity to their oppositional forms than to uses of the same form with a different function.

- (iii) All imperative uses share features that stand in opposition to other uses.

*Important aspects of the polysemous approach*

- (i) There is no necessary and sufficient condition for the imperative that predicts which uses are correct and which are not.
- (ii) Different imperative uses have an 'independent' character.
- (iii) The relation between the different uses can be analyzed in terms of semantic transfers (which means that some uses can be seen as extensions of other uses).

The approach that I advocated can be seen as an intermediate position between the monosemous approach and the polysemous approach. It shares with the monosemous approach the idea that some collection of features (viz. directivity) can be seen as a necessary and sufficient condition for the correct understanding (rather than correct use) of the imperative, and with the polysemous approach it shares the idea that different uses have a more or less independent status, and that different uses can be analyzed in terms of extensions of other uses. I would like to stress that it is quite possible that new data, both synchronic and diachronic, may change the proposed structure of meaning relations between the different uses. Nevertheless, I think that an analysis of the meaning structure of the imperative must principally follow the approach that I have used.

Finally some words have to be said about the status of the different types. In my analysis I have not thoroughly investigated the issues of (a) period and diachronic change, (b) style and register, and (c) idiomaticity. Below I will briefly make some general remarks about these issues.

Firstly, some uses are confined to a particular period, and are no longer productively used in modern Russian. This is the case for example with the concessive uses with third persons, which were still productive in the nineteenth century, but in modern Russian occur almost exclusively in petrified expressions. No clear motivation can be given for the disappearance of this use, but it may be that the disappearance of third person cases is connected with the disappearance of clear third person hortative cases in the imperative system, more especially the disappearance of the optative imperative.

The optative imperative use occurs in modern Russian only in petrified expressions; in the beginning of the nineteenth century the optative imperative was still productive in high-style literary discourse with archaic features. The decline of the optative imperative is probably related to the rise of the lexical item *пуст*; this explanation also

motivates the productive use of the conditional imperative, since this use does not stand in opposition to *pust'*.

A similar phenomenon can be perceived in the case of the narrative imperative. In the nineteenth century the narrative imperative still occurred in literary texts, but in modern Russian there seems to be a stronger restriction to very specific styles and registers (*skaž*, spoken language). The tendency of decline of the narrative imperative can probably be attributed to the oppositional construction with *vzjat'*.

Secondly, the style and register are important in the study of the polysemous complex. Some uses of the imperative are confined to particular styles or registers. This is the case for example with the narrative imperative, which in modern Russian only occurs in spoken language, and in *skaž*-type language. In the case of the other imperative uses, restrictions to particular styles can often be attributed to the *meaning* of the imperative. Since the imperative always expresses a situation that breaks the expected course of events, it has a typical modal subjective character. This character is typical of discourse where the speaker's involvement is at stake, and not so much of less informal texts, such as scientific texts.

Finally, the study of the polysemous complex must take account of degrees of idiomaticity and the restriction of uses to particular lexical items, and particular contexts. In the case of the necessitive imperative use, there is a tendency of restriction to constructions without expressed subject (generic interpretation) and to third or first person subjects in contrastive constructions. As I have explained above, these restrictions can be attributed to the meaning of this use. In the case of the optative imperative there is a restriction to petrified expressions, mostly expressions where reference is made to a supernatural force; in the spoken language, the optative imperative can be used in non-petrified expressions with the lexical item *byl'* and the particle *by*. The concessive imperative use is restricted to idiomatic expressions in the case of third persons. Also in the case of a non-expressed subject (generic interpretation), or second persons a tendency can be perceived to use the construction in idiomatic expressions. I think that the tendency to idiomaticity is, at least partly, connected to the specific 'rhetorical' character of the imperative construction under discussion: the language user can make use of 'prefab' expressions with a strong rhetorical character. Further analysis of the imperative will have to focus on these specific features.

## CHAPTER IV

---

# Meaning and interpretation of the dative-infinitive construction

### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will present an analysis of the Russian construction with an infinitival predicate, a so-called 'dative subject', and in some specific cases impersonal use of the verb *byt'* ('be'). Note that in Russian the verb *byt'* is usually not expressed in the present. In cases where there is an opposition with the past tense or the future tense of *byt'*, some scholars therefore speak of a zero form of *byt'*. In the construction under discussion the past or future tense of *byt'* is expressed under specific circumstances.

The construction expresses that the participant in the dative is the recipient of the situation expressed by the infinitive, or put differently, the participant expressed in the dative is the potential agent of the situation expressed by the infinitive, which is assigned to him by a force. The verb *byt'* ('be') can, under particular conditions, be used to relate this scene to a time before, or after the moment of speaking. Some examples of this construction are given below:

- (1) **Mne eshche reshat' zadachu.** (Maurice, 1995: 115)  
I-DAT still solve-INF-IMPERF problem  
'I still have to solve the problem.'
- (2) **Tebe zavtra ne vstavat' rano.** (Maurice, 1995: 152)  
you-DAT tomorrow not get.up-INF-IMPERF early  
'You don't have to get up early tomorrow.'

*Meaning and interpretation of the DI-construction*

- (3) **Byt' groze!** (Bricyn, 1990: 219/ A. Vetrov)  
be-INF-IMPERF thunder-DAT  
'There will be thunder.'
- (4) **Ne byt' miru i porjadku**, poka Imperija ne raskinetsja, kak ran'she (...).<sup>1</sup> (A. Koul, *Vozvrachshenie imperatora*)  
not be-INF peace-DAT and order-DAT, as.long empire not spreads.out, as before  
'There won't be peace and order, as long as the empire doesn't extend, as before.'
- (5) **Emu ne razobrat'sja** samomu. (*Russkaja Grammatika*, 1980, II: 373)  
he-DAT not understand-INF-PERF self-DAT  
'He can't understand it by himself.'
- (6) **Pete zalezť** na derevo, a Mishe net. (Mets, 1985: 205)  
Petja-DAT climb-INF-PERF on tree, but Misha-DAT not  
'Petja can climb the tree, but Misha can't.'
- (7) **Polez Zhilin v dyru, chtob i Kostylinu prolezť.** (Garde, 1963: 291/ L. Tolstoj)  
climbed Zhilin in hole, in.order and Kostylin-DAT get.through-INF-PERF  
'Zhilin climbed into the hole, so that Kostylin could also get through.'

In the literature this construction is treated as part of the class of so-called 'infinitive sentences', that is, the class of constructions where the infinitive can be seen as the *predicate* of the sentence (e.g. *Russkaja Grammatika*, 1980). Since the dative-infinitive construction is the main construction in Russian that constitutes the class of infinitive sentences, some authors use this term to refer specifically to the construction under discussion (e.g. Bricyn, 1990). Another name that occurs in the literature is 'modal infinitive' (Maurice, 1996). This term is used because the dative-infinitive construction has a modal character, and expresses notions such as (absence of) necessity, (im)possibility, directivity, and wish. In my analysis I will use the term *dative-infinitive construction*, or *DI-construction*, for this construction. The choice of this term is motivated by the formal structure of the sentences given above, namely the occurrence of the dative and the infinitive. It must be remarked, however, that some constructions with an infinitive predicate where no dative is expressed, share important semantic and syntactic features with the DI-construction. The absence of a dative in such sentences can in some cases be motivated by the generic status of the agent of the infinitive situation. In such cases

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.atlant.ru:8070/library/koul/ComeBack/116.htm>

it is possible to insert the sentence into the paradigm of the DI-construction. In other sentences the dative is not expressed because the nature of the potential agent is given contextually, and therefore not formally expressed; in such sentences a dative noun may be inserted in the sentence. Although these constructions cannot strictly be seen as instances of the DI-construction, I will discuss them as well, since they share important semantic-syntactic features with the DI-construction.

Several scholars have given overviews of the different uses of the DI-construction (e.g. Timofeev, 1950; Veyrenc, 1979; Bricyn 1990, and Maurice, 1996). Besides these overviews, the DI-construction has also received attention from scholars addressing more theoretical issues. The main discussion about the DI-construction centers on the question how the different uses or interpretations of the construction can be accounted for (e.g. Maurice, 1995, 1996), and what the semantic-syntactic status is of the different constituents in the construction. More specific questions that have been addressed concern which constituent the modal nature of the construction can be attributed to (e.g. Wierzbicka, 1966; Veyrenc, 1979; Zolotova, 1982; Ebeling, 1984; Bricyn, 1990; Schoorlemmer, 1995), and whether all instances of the construction have a modal meaning (e.g. Schoorlemmer, 1995; Rubinstein, 1986). Before going into the research question of this chapter, I will briefly discuss the different uses of the DI-construction.

The DI-construction is used, in both interrogative and assertive sentences, to express different shades of *necessity*, or in the case of negation, *absence of necessity*; examples of such uses are given in (1)–(4). In such sentences the infinitive prototypically has the imperfective aspect. As I will argue below, the necessity of the DI-construction has a typical ‘ontic’ character, expressing the ‘way things are/ go’, and differs as such from other forms that express necessity. In the context of negation, and prototypically the perfective aspect, the DI-construction is used to express different shades of *impossibility*; an example of such use is given in (5). The possibility interpretation, and notions close to possibility, occurs in specific contexts only. These are interrogative contexts, and non-interrogative contexts with the operators *tol’ko* (‘only’), *edva* (‘hardly’) and *vrjad li* (‘it is doubtful whether’), sentences with the subordinators *chtoby* (‘in order’) as in (7) above, sentences with the particle *xot* (‘even’), and contrastive sentences, as in (6) above. The contexts for the possibility interpretation can partly be identified with contexts that can be reduced in some way or another to negation, and that are contexts for so-called negative polarity items. This the case for example with the operators *tol’ko* (‘only’), *edva* (‘hardly’), *vrjad li* (‘it is doubtful whether’), which are all contexts for negative polarity items across languages, and can be reduced to negation in a

straightforward way (see Van der Wouden, 1994; Giannakidou, 1997). A reduction to negation is, however, more problematic in other contexts, for example in the case of the subordinator *chtoby* ('in order') as in (7) above. Operators like *chtoby* ('in order') are not listed in the literature as constituting negative contexts.

The DI-construction also occurs with the particle *by*; the function of this particle is to indicate that the realization of the infinitive action takes place in a hypothetical world or mental space only. Uses of the DI-construction with *by* can express different modal notions, such as wish or direction, e.g.:

- (8) **Otdoxnut' by mne.** (Mets, 1985: 358)  
Rest-INF-PERF IRR I-DAT  
'If only I could rest.'

Most uses of the DI-construction have a clear modal character, hence the name 'modal infinitive' for this construction (Maurice, 1995, 1996). Uses that do not have a clear modal interpretation, and which are sometimes erroneously treated as altogether non-modal (e.g. Schoorlemmer, 1995: 64), occur in specific contexts only, namely with the subordinators *esli* ('if'), *pered tem kak* ('before'), and *chtoby* ('in order to'):

- (9) **Gruzovik i kombajn tozhe bezvredny, esli im ne perebegat' dorogu.** (Bricyn, 1990: 285/ V. Panova)  
truck and harvester also harmless, if they-DAT not cross-INF-PERF road  
'The truck and the combine-harvester are also harmless, if they do not cross the road.'
- (10) **A nedavno, pered tem kak vzojti lune,** po nebu letala bol'shushchaja ptica. (Comrie, 1974: 133/ Gor'kij)  
but recently before rise-INF-PERF moon-DAT, about sky flew huge bird  
'Recently, before the moon rose, a huge bird was flying about the sky.'
- (11) **Oni zhдут poezda, kotoryj ix povezet, chtoby im ne opozdat' kuda-to.** (Rubinstein, 1986: 367/ Okudzhava)  
they wait.for train, that them takes, in.order they-DAT not be.late-INF-PERF somewhere  
'They wait for the train which will take them, so that they won't be late.'

As I will argue below, sentences like these are also modal in nature, but the modal character has a more abstract nature.

The DI-construction can be paraphrased with different Russian forms, depending on the context in which it occurs. Among the oppositional forms are modal predicates of

necessity (*nado, nužno, sledovat'* etc.), possibility (*moč', možno, nel'zja, udat'sja*), and the future tense (the perfect present, the future tense of *byt'*). The different oppositional forms of the DI-construction indicate that different uses can be distinguished for the DI-construction. Nevertheless, the different uses of the DI-construction share features that are absent in the case of oppositional forms. I will go into these features below.

Having briefly discussed the different uses of the DI-construction, I will now discuss the relation of the DI-construction to other constructions in the linguistic system. More specifically, I will discuss the 'subject' function of the dative in the DI-construction in relation to similar functions of the dative in other constructions, and I will discuss the 'predicate' function of the infinitive in the DI-construction in relation to similar functions of the infinitive in other constructions.

The DI-construction is part of a family of constructions where no nominative subject is expressed or expressible, and where the dative is associated with the highest-ranking semantic role on the scale of agentivity (see Fillmore, 1968). In the DI-construction, the dative expresses the recipient of the situation expressed by the infinitive, and the past or future tense of the verb *byt'* in the neuter declension situates this scene to a time before or after the speech moment; in the present tense no form is expressed. The DI-construction is related to constructions where the dative participant can be seen as the recipient of an adverbial state, and where the infinitive, under particular circumstances, may be expressed to specify the adverbial state:

- (12) Mne nado bylo rabotat'.  
 I-DAT necessary-ADV was-NEUT work-INF-IMPERF  
 'I had to work.'

In this sentence the dative can be seen as the recipient of the state expressed by the adverbial predicate; the infinitive has the function of a subject-complement or specification (see 4.4.4 for an analysis). The DI-construction differs from the construction with an adverbial predicate because in the DI-construction the dative subject is the recipient of the situation expressed by the infinitival predicate; this means that the participant expressed in the dative can be seen as the *potential* agent of the situation expressed by the infinitive (see 4.6).

Besides the DI-construction, an interpretation of the dative as the potential agent also occurs in the case of the so-called existential construction, e.g.:

- (13) Est mne kuda idti. (Veyrenc, 1979: 72)  
 is I-DAT where go-INF-IMPERF

‘There is somewhere for me to go.’

In this sentence the participant expressed by the dative is the recipient of the existence of a place, which is characterized by the infinitive situation. This means that, in contrast to the DI-construction, the dative participant is only *indirectly* the potential agent of the infinitive situation. The existential construction is related to the DI-construction, but differs both syntactically and semantically. I will discuss the existential construction in 4.16.2.

In the literature the term ‘dative subject’ is used by some authors for the use of the dative as it occurs in the DI-construction and constructions with an adverbial predicate. (e.g. Zaichkova, 1972; Schoorlemmer, 1995). The term *subject* is used to indicate that this particular use of the dative shares semantic-syntactic features with the nominative subject. Nominative subjects in Russian have certain syntactic properties that set them apart from other parts of the sentence. These are predicate agreement, so-called anaphoric binding, and gerund binding (see Neidle, 1982: 422; Schoorlemmer, 1995: 59–60). Dative subjects do not induce verbal agreement, but they do bind anaphors and gerunds.<sup>2</sup> As such they fall, at least partly, within the set criteria formulated by Keenan (1976) for subjecthood. I will discuss the term ‘dative subject’ in more detail in 4.3.2, but it should be kept in mind that I use the term ‘dative subject’ for sentences or clauses where the participant expressed in the dative is associated with the highest-ranking semantic role on the scale of agentivity, and where there is no nominative subject available for the finite verb.

In the Russian linguistic literature (*Russkaja Grammatika*, 1980; Zolotova, 1982; Bricyn, 1990) the DI-construction is treated as part of a family of constructions where the infinitive is analyzed as the *predicate* of the sentence or clause, the so-called ‘infinitive sentences’. In most instances of the DI-construction, the infinitive forms a sentence or a subordinate clause (for example in sentences where the DI-construction is introduced by *čto*). In some cases, however, the infinitive and the dative can best be analyzed as the specification to a noun. An example of such a construction is given below:

- (14) Selixov segodnja s utra dal komandu **vsem otdyxat’**, **kupat’sja**. (Bricyn, 1990: 155/ A. Salynskij)  
Selixov today from morning gave order everyone-DAT rest-INF-IMPERF, swim-INF  
‘This morning Selixov gave an order that everyone should rest and swim.’

---

<sup>2</sup> Such cases are sometimes considered ungrammatical.

In this sentence the noun *komandu* ('order') is specified by the infinitive, and, as I will argue below, the dative is interpreted both as the dative subject of the infinitive and as the indirect object of the noun. Constructions like these will be discussed separately in 4.16.3, since they differ from the DI-construction in important respects.

In the DI-construction, the infinitival predicate occurs with a dative subject; in other constructions where the infinitive can be seen as the predicate, the infinitive can also occur with a nominative subject, as in (15), or without expressed or expressible subject at all, as in (16):

- (15) **Ty – smejat'sja** nado mnoj? Ax ty, molokos. (Ebeling, 1984: 119 / Ostrovskij)  
 you-NOM – laugh-INF-IMPERF at me? Oh you, baby  
 'You, laugh at me? What do you know?'
- (16) **Mnogo znat' – malo spat'**. (Veyrenc, 1979: 46)  
 much know-INF-IMPERF – little sleep-INF-IMPERF  
 'To know a lot, means to sleep little.'

As I will argue below, the dative occurs with an infinitive predicate to express the specific *modal* semantics of this combination. This specific modal character is absent in infinitive sentences with a nominative, or in constructions where no subject is expressible.

Besides the occurrence of the DI-construction with dative (pro)nouns, I will also analyze the occurrence of *odin* ('alone') and *sam* ('self') in the dative case when they occur as adjuncts to an infinitive (cf. Neidle, 1982, 1988). An example of such a so-called 'second dative' is given below:

- (17) **Xotel ot nas otdelat'sja, da? Chtoby samomu uliznut'**, kak pytalsja vchera?<sup>3</sup> (R. Zheljazny, *Dolina Prokeljatij*)  
 wanted from us escape, yes? In.order self-DAT slip.away-INF-PERF, how tried yesterday  
 'You wanted to escape us, didn't you? So that you could slip away by yourselves, like you tried yesterday.'

In my analysis I will argue that the construction with the second dative must be seen as a special instance of the DI-construction. The second dative will be discussed in 4.17.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.moshkow.pp.ru:5000/lat/ZELQZNY/damnatio.txt>

Now that the DI-construction has been introduced in a general way, the research question can be presented:

**What is the meaning of the combination of the dative as ‘subject’ (= the dative is not part of the valency structure of the main verb, and no nominative subject is expressed or expressible) and the infinitive as predicate?**

More specifically, I will address the following issues in this analysis:

- (i) Can one meaning be attributed to the DI-construction or is the construction polysemous?
- (ii) Can the abstract meaning of the DI-construction be seen as compositional, i.e. can it be derived from its component parts?
- (iii) What is the semantic-syntactic status of the different constituents in the construction?
- (iv) How can the different interpretations of the construction, both modal and so-called ‘non-modal’, be accounted for?
- (v) How can the restriction of particular interpretations to particular context types be explained?
- (vi) In what contexts is a dative assigned to the infinitive?

I will argue that an abstract meaning can be attributed to the DI-construction. This meaning can be defined both as an abstraction from the total of occurrences of the DI-construction, and as the result of the composition of the different component parts of the construction. A compositional analysis can account for the range of uses of the construction and for the restriction of the construction to specific contexts. Moreover, the idea that one can give semantic maps or paths showing that occurrence of some uses can only be explained as later developments (e.g. Van der Auwera & Plungian, 1998, for some uses of the DI-construction; Sweetser, 1990, for modality in general) cannot be sustained for this construction; the different uses of the construction must be seen as *interpretations* of a more abstract general meaning.

The semantic-syntactic status of the DI-construction has received considerable attention from many scholars. The DI-construction is interesting in a theoretical respect because the construction has so-called modal interpretations, while no modal element is expressed in the construction. This has led some scholars, mainly those working from a generative framework, to posit a non-expressed underlying modal

element in the DI-construction similar to modal adverbs (e.g. Schoorlemmer, 1994, 1995). In this analysis I will show that the modal interpretation of the construction can be derived from the meanings of the constituents, without it being necessary to posit such an underlying modal element.

Another semantic-syntactic issue raised in the literature is the question of which constituent must be seen as the predicative or ‘verbal’ element of the construction. In the literature the predicative element of the construction is taken to be either the infinitive (e.g. Timofeev, 1950; *Russkaja Grammatika*, 1980; Bricyn, 1990), or the verb *byt’* (‘be’) (e.g. Veyrenc, 1979).<sup>4</sup> In my analysis I will argue that no main predicative element is expressed in this construction, but that the predicativeness is an interpretative phenomenon that arises from the interaction of the meaning between the dative and the meaning of the infinitive, more specifically the unification of the non-expressed infinitive subject and the participant expressed by the dative noun.

Another reason why the DI-construction is interesting is that it has such *different* interpretations, ranging from clearly modal uses to uses that do not have a clear modal interpretation, and that, as I will argue, are often mistakenly called ‘non-modal’. To my knowledge, no adequate answer has been given in the literature to the question how the modal interpretations are related to the so-called ‘non-modal’ ones. Related to this issue is the question of how the different modal interpretations are related to one another. Maurice (1995, 1996) has addressed this question, and has pointed out that the difference between a necessitive interpretation and one of impossibility is connected with the question of whether an intention can be ascribed to the dative participant to realize the action expressed by the infinitive.<sup>5</sup> Maurice did not, however, analyze the relation between the different interpretations of the construction and the meanings of the different constituents in the construction. She did not, for example, address the question of why the construction expresses possibility only in very specific contexts, taking into account the meaning of the construction. In this analysis I will argue that the occurrence of specific interpretations of the construction in specific contexts can be accounted for if we take the meaning of the construction and the ‘meaning’ of modality into consideration. I will argue that a model of modality such as that presented in Talmy (1985) can motivate the occurrence of the use of possibility to a restricted set of contexts. As such, the analysis of the DI-construction may give further insight into the phenomenon of interpretation in general and that of modality, especially

---

<sup>4</sup> None of these authors, however, explicitly discuss the difference between the predicate and the predicative or verbal element.

<sup>5</sup> However, the importance of context is also mentioned by other authors, e.g. Bricyn, 1990.

the interconnection between such notions as '(im)possibility' and '(un)necessity', in particular.

In my analysis I will show that the assignment of the dative to the infinitive is semantically motivated. This means that all the instances of the DI-construction share semantic features. Taking the semantics of the different forms in the construction into consideration makes it possible to relate the different uses – both modal and so-called 'non modal'- of the construction to one another, to explain the systematic occurrence of the dative in the construction, and to account for the different interpretations. Furthermore, this approach makes it possible to relate the contexts where the infinitive predicate is combined with a dative (pro-)noun to the contexts where *odin* ('alone') and *sam* ('self') occur as adjuncts of the infinitive in the dative. As such, the approach advocated here provides a 'deeper' explanation for the phenomena under discussion than analyses proceeding from a generative framework (e.g. Franks, 1990; Kondrashova, 1994; Junghanns, 1994; Schoorlemmer, 1995), or analyses operating within the framework of Lexical Functional Grammar, more specifically that of Neidle (1982, 1988). In these analyses meaning is not systematically taken into account in the syntactic analysis. Such an approach fails to draw parallels between different interrelated phenomena, and to motivate them.

In the following sections I will look at the questions raised above. In 4.2 I will briefly discuss the method that I will use to analyze the DI-construction, and touch on the topic of compositionality. In the next sections, 4.3–4.5, I will discuss the meaning and use of the different constituents of the construction: the dative, the infinitive and the verb *byť* ('be') respectively. In 4.6 I will consider the abstract meaning and the semantic-syntactic structure of the construction. In 4.7–4.8 I will discuss the usage types and classification of the construction. The last part (4.9–4.17) consists of an analysis of the different uses of the construction, and of other related constructions. This part should be seen as an overview of the different uses and the contexts in which they occur, and the rules of interpretation. Finally, in 4.18, I will present my conclusion.

## **4.2 Method**

In this section I will set out the way in which I will analyze the construction, and address the question of whether the construction is compositional.

Before addressing the general issue of method and compositionality, I will first briefly present the different constituents in the construction. The DI-construction is constituted

by a dative noun or pronoun, an infinitive, and in some cases the verb *byt'* ('be') in the past or future tense (*byl/budet*) in the neuter declensions.<sup>6</sup> I will propose that the following meanings are relevant for the meaning of the construction:

- (i) infinitive: situation type
- (ii) *byl/budet* (past/ future tense of *byt'*): auxiliary of time
- (iii) dative: the participant is a recipient/ experiencer

The infinitive expresses aspect (perfective or imperfective), and can be negated; the negation is placed before the infinitive. There are no lexical restrictions on the lexical items that can occur as infinitives in the construction, although some interpretations are restricted to lexical items of specific classes. This is the case for example with the so-called 'epistemic-ontic' uses of the construction, where the knowledge of the way things go can be seen as evidence that lead the speaker to conclude that the infinitive situation will necessarily be the case, these uses only occur with lexical items that can be interpreted as 'states' (see Bricyn, 1990: 214–215). In some cases the DI-construction occurs with sentences where no infinitive is expressed, but where the identity of the infinitive can be inferred from the context, e.g.:

- (18) Ego put' na Krajnij Sever, v samye nizov'ja. Mne by na nem tuda! (*Russkaja Grammatika*, 1980, II: 377/ Sartakov)  
 (...) I-DAT IRR on her there  
 'The journey will go to the very edge of the north. If only I could go there.'
- (19) A mne chto? (Zoshchenko, 1935)  
 but I-DAT what?  
 'But what must I do?/ But how does that concern me?'

In the first sentence, the combination of the infinitive with *by*, the dative, and the time indication (*tuda*), together with the pragmatic context in which the sentence is uttered, implies that the situation referred to must be identified with an act of movement, comparable to 'going'. In the second sentence the situation could be identified with something like *delat'* ('do'). Such sentences are special instances of the DI-construction.

The verb *byt'* occurs with an inflection for tense (past/ future/ 'zero' for present), and person (neuter), and cannot be negated. The occurrence of this verb is subject to

---

<sup>6</sup> I will also discuss cases where the dative is an adjunct.

particular restrictions, viz. to particular lexical items and contexts; I will consider these restrictions below in more detail. It must be remarked here that in Russian the verb *byt'* is usually not expressed in the present tense; in such cases there is normally an opposition with the past tense and the future tense. In the case of the DI-construction, however, there are additional restrictions on the expression of the past tense and the future tense, which can be attributed to the *meaning* of the construction.<sup>7</sup>

The neutral word order for the DI-construction is dative-infinitive, but this word order can be changed. A restriction on the word order of the DI-construction is that the infinitive and *bylol budet* always seem to occur as a single constituent (see Veyrenc, 1979; *Akademicheskaja Grammatika*, 1980, II: 378). This means that *bylol budet* can occur before the infinitive, or as a clitic after the infinitive.

The (pro)noun in the dative can occur with both animate and inanimate participants. There are restrictions on the class of verbs that can occur in the DI-construction: impersonal verbs that indicate meteorological phenomena or psychological states cannot form infinitive sentences (Bricyn, 1990: 25). The impossibility of forming infinitive sentences with these lexical items can be motivated by the absence of the idea of an agent in these cases.

In some cases no dative is expressed, especially in directives (where the addressee is the potential agent), interrogatives or sentences with *by* where the speaker can be identified with the potential agent (PA), and in the case of a generic agent:

*Directive (PA=addressee)*

- (20) **Molchat'**  
be.silent-INF-IMPERF!  
'Be silent!'

*Question (PA=speaker)*

- (21) **Kak poexat' v centr?**  
how go-INF-PERF in center  
'How can I get into the center?'

---

<sup>7</sup> Whether one wishes to speak of a zero form of the verb *byt'* in this case is, in my opinion, foremost a matter of taste.

*Wish (PA=speaker)*

- (22)     Vot by **uznat'**, chto tvorilos' u starogo skazochnika v golove, kogda on sochinjal ètu istoriju<sup>8</sup>  
           PRT IRR know-INF-PERF what was.created at old fairy.tale.writer in head, when he created that history  
           'If only I knew what was going on in the head of the old fairy-tale writer when he created this history.'

*Generic reading of impossibility (PA=generic agent)*

- (23)     Vam ponachalu pridetsja prignut'sja, inache zdes' ne **projti**, no èto nichego<sup>9</sup> (R. Fejst, *Vrata vojny*)  
           you first.of.all must bend, otherwise here not pass-INF-PERF, but that nothing  
           'First of all you must bend, otherwise it's impossible to pass here, but that's no problem.'

In the case of directives (20) and sentences where the speaker must be identified with the non-expressed infinitive subject (21), (22), a dative (*tebe* or *mne* respectively) can be used, although this leads to a subtle change in meaning of the expression. In the case of the generic interpretation, as in (23), the expression of a dative changes the specific generic interpretation of the sentence. Nevertheless, such cases fall within the paradigm of the DI-construction (*mnel tebel emul naml vaml im ne prijti*). Although the constructions discussed here are not strictly speaking instances of the DI-construction, I will discuss such sentences as well because they share important semantic and syntactic properties with sentences with a dative.

Having now discussed the constituents of the DI-construction in a general way, I will address the question of how the DI-construction can best be analyzed. The syntax can be modeled as the combining of the components to form a new component. The syntax of some construction follows the following general rules:

1. Constructions have a hierarchical structure, i.e. a constituency structure. This means that constructions can be divided into components that may also consist of components.

---

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.russ.ru:8085/krug/razbor/19991210.html>

<sup>9</sup> <http://lib.nordnet.ru/lat/FEIST/appret.txt>

2. Meanings can be modeled as information frames with slots. Such slots can be seen as information variables. The syntax can be modeled as the filling of these slots. The identity of the slots is sought in the context. This process cannot be identified with some psychological process of sentence parsing, but is rather a reconstruction of the conventional sentence structure.
3. Constituents form conceptual entities. Because of this, the filling in of slots happens in chunks (constituents). This means that information may be stored, or held, such that the filling in of slots may be delayed. (see Keijsper, 1985).
4. The hierarchical structure of constituents may be described in terms of relational hierarchies, that are connected with the information structure of the clause, i.e. *linking* (see Keijsper, 1985).
5. In order for a word or string of words to be a construction, some component, or the total of components must be associated with a predicate (predicative minimum), or to put it differently, in order for an expression to be *informative*, something has to be said about something (From the tradition of Aristotle).<sup>10</sup>

The general rules given here must be reflected in the representation of constructions. In this book, I will use a representation with a tree structure, and a non-formal way of representing information frames. I will present my representation by taking an instance of the DI-construction (Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1 is a representation of the process of relating information frames to one another such that their slots are filled in. As can be seen in Figure 4.1, the relating of frames occurs in chunks; in the representation above the dative frame is only filled in when the infinitive frame and the *byt'* frame are already related to each other. This does not mean that the information expressed by the dative is not considered when these two frames are related to each other: information that is expressed remains active but can be put 'on hold'. Furthermore, note that the question of which constituent can be seen as the predicate of the sentence, or the predicative element/ idea of the sentence, can only be decided when the whole sentence is uttered. It may be for example that the infinitive is first interpreted as the predicate, but later reinterpreted because some other predicate is uttered. The predicate structure of the sentence is therefore given at the top. In my analysis of constructions, I will start with the constituents that make up the

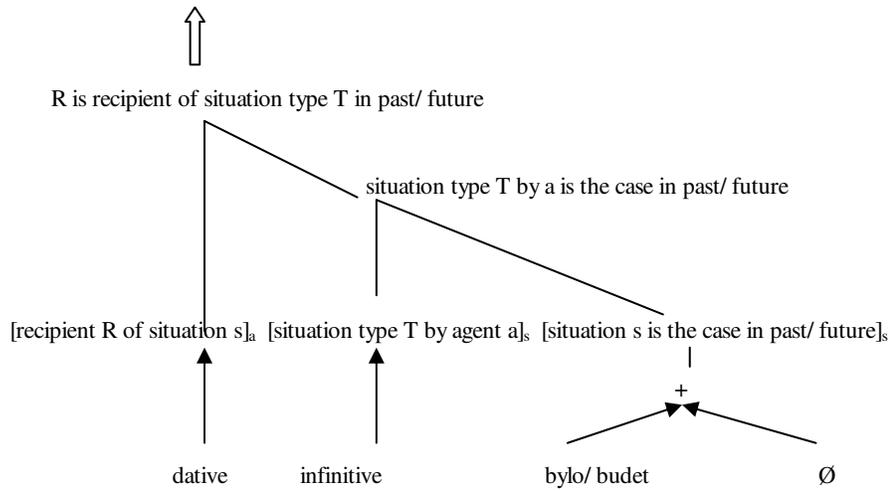
---

<sup>10</sup> In the case of expressions such as *spasibo* ('thank you') the whole expression must be seen as a predicate. Such expressions do not have a subject-predicate structure. In fact, I do not think that the idea of predicativity necessarily means that constructions have a subject-predicate structure in the sense that particular constituents must be identified with either subject or predicate.

construction and work bottom-up, instead of top-down. The strategies that are used to semantically combine components are the result of the information contained in the individual components and general rules of interpretation. Such interpretational rules may be inferred from other constructions where they also apply, but are basically general in nature.

Figure 4.1

V+ = non-expressed (IS THE CASE, APPLIES, MUST, CAN, etc., depending on the context)  
 'Predicate' = INF

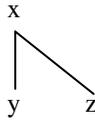


where:

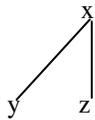


=<sub>def</sub> form x is associated with information y

*Meaning and interpretation of the DI-construction*



=<sub>def</sub> x is decomposed into y and z, where z is linked to y



=<sub>def</sub> x is decomposed into y and z, where y is linked to z

Letters in inverted commas refer to identified concepts ('x'...n; 'X'...n )

Letters refer to non-identified concepts; e.g. a = agent, s = situation

[...] refers to information frames

[...]<sub>(a..z)</sub>, refers to the conceptual status (a..z) of information frames ([...])

The large arrow on top of the tree refers to the predicate structure of the sentence

---

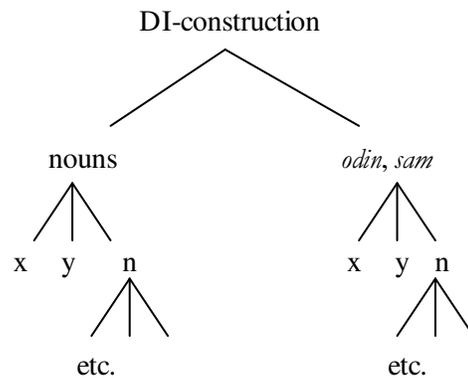
The concept of general rules of interpretation may be rather vague, so I will illustrate it with an example. Consider the sentence *John ate*. In this sentence *John* and *ate*, are related to each other such that *John* is the agent of *ate*. This can be modeled as the filling in of slots in the different information frames (*ate* has an action frame and can contain an agent and a goal). In the information frame of *ate* there is a slot for the object of the action. In this sentence no object is given. Because of this the object of the action is interpreted either as referring to a contextually given object, or to a non-specified object (*John ate something*). In the latter case the identity of the object is 'pushed to the background', for example because it is not relevant for the communication. The interpreting of some non-expressed argument as referring to some non-specified entity must be seen as a general rule of interpretation. This rule can be semantically or pragmatically motivated: if some information is not relevant, it is not expressed. This is a general pragmatic principle basic to communication. Note, however, that the grammar must state the cases in which such rules may be applied by the speaker; languages may differ in the extent to which slots may remain unspecified. In the case of the DI-construction the reference to interpretational rules is relevant for cases like (20)–(23), where the identity of the participant associated with the potential agent of the infinitive is not formally expressed, but is implied by the context.

I will proceed from the point of view that the meaning of the DI-construction can be *reconstructed* from the composition of the meanings of its component parts or from other constructions already established in the grammar. This is not to say that the construction can be said to be compositional in the sense that the meaning of the construction can be strictly *predicted* in some way or another from its component parts or from other constructions already established in the grammar. Because of the flexibility and multi-interpretability of meanings, and the prototype effects that are associated with meanings, constructions are never compositional in the sense that the result of the composition of meanings can be *predicted* in some strict sense. It is difficult to define when one can actually speak of *prediction* because the notion of prediction in language is a highly subjective and theory-dependent notion. Whether something is predictable or reconstructable in language is a matter of degree, and something for which no strict logical or deductive basis can be given. It therefore makes more sense in the case of language to speak of ‘motivation’ rather than about prediction. The importance of motivation in the field of language is further evidenced by some motivation-based reasoning strategies used in Artificial Intelligence, e.g. the strategy of abduction, where after-the-fact inferencing is used to determine why a given sequence of event should have occurred as it did. (Goldberg, 1995: 71). In contrast to the notion of deduction, the notion of motivation is inherently a matter of degree, and probability. This character is also evident in the description of ‘motivation’ given by Lakoff (1990: 537–540), where a given construction is motivated *to the degree* that its structure is based on other constructions in the language.

The idea that the notion of strict predictability does not make sense in language, and that it is better to speak of motivation, implies that constructions, as linguistic phenomena, are *never* purely compositional. As such, constructions may very well be conceptualized as ‘wholes’ or ‘entire Gestalts’ (Lakoff, 1990: 539). This is not to say, however, that the composition of the different components in the construction does not play an important part in the construction of this ‘whole’. This point is also made by Goldberg (1995: 24), who works within the framework of Construction Grammar. She remarks that the analysis of constructions must be both top-down (from the construction to the components) and bottom-up (from the components to the construction). She argues, however, that constructions must be seen as the basic units in language, because they *contribute* meaning to the components of the construction (Goldberg, 1995: 4, 10, 16). In my opinion, such a modeling of constructions is indeed ‘elegant’ for the analysis of many constructions, especially for the constructions analyzed by Goldberg herself. I do not think, however, that such an analysis necessarily contradicts analyses of constructions that

focus on the composition of those constructions.<sup>11</sup> For my analysis I think that the focus on the individual components in the construction is necessary to motivate the specific distribution of the construction, more specifically the peripheral status of cases that express possibility. Analyses that start out from abstract meanings of the construction (e.g. Bricyn, 1990; Maurice, 1996) fail to provide motivation for such facts. This is not to say that different usage types cannot be distinguished on different levels of abstraction (cf. Figure 4.2).

Figure 4.2



where *x*, *y*, etc. refer to different lexical items

In many cases these different usage types correspond to more or less clear-cut constructions that may well have an 'independent' status in the process of language parsing and production. In my analysis, however, I will focus mainly on the systematization of and behind these conventional uses. This means that I will try to motivate the interpretation of particular instances of the construction.

In the analysis of the DI-construction I will use the following procedure:

---

<sup>11</sup> Although I agree with the analyses given by Goldberg, I think that she partly bases her evidence for the basic status of constructions on an incomplete analysis (Goldberg, 1995: 15–16). In her example of the use of the Dutch impersonal passive, she does not prove that the restriction to non-telic use of verbs in the construction cannot be based on the meanings of the constituents in the construction (*er, worden*). I would prefer an analysis that focuses more on the meanings of constituents in the analysis of constructions.

- (i) Definition of the meanings of the forms in the construction by abstraction from the total of occurrences of the forms in the considered set of data.
- (ii) Definition of the abstract meaning of the construction by composition.
- (iii) Definition of the abstract meaning of the construction by abstraction from the total of occurrences of the construction in the considered set of data.
- (iv) Description and motivation for the rules of interpretation of the construction.

Firstly, the meaning of the different components of the DI-construction must be defined. This can be done by abstraction from the total of occurrences of these forms in the language structure in the considered set of data.<sup>12</sup> In some cases, uses can be grouped together, such that prototypical and peripheral uses can be established. Peripheral uses are understood in terms of the more prototypical uses, such that eventually an abstract meaning for all the uses of a particular form can be given, or in other cases, polysemous complexes can be established.

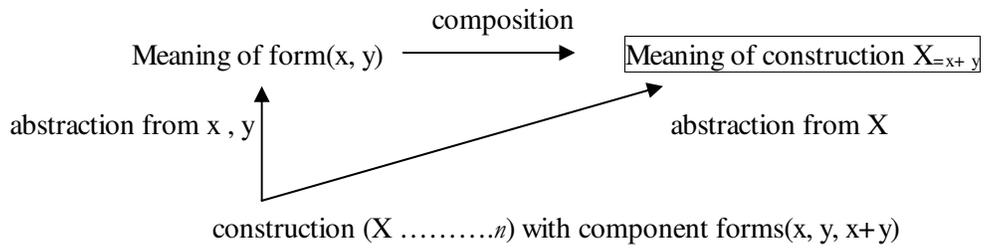
Secondly, the meaning of the construction can be defined by means of the composition of the different components in the construction and the way in which they occur in the construction (word order and accentuation). This abstract meaning can be seen as a theoretical construct that defines the borders of use of the DI-construction. This meaning is inherently fuzzy and general because it does not take account of the influence of other forms or constructions in the language structure. It does, therefore, not contain all the information on the particular distribution of the construction. This means that while it may contain enough information to interpret an instance of the construction, it does not contain enough information to correctly predict which uses are possible and which not. Because important information may be lost in the process of defining the meaning of forms by means of abstraction, it may be necessary to go back to the initial data, viz. the occurrences of constructions themselves, and abstract from them.

The third theoretical step is therefore the abstraction from the total of occurrences of the construction, taking into account the already established meanings of the individual constituents in the construction. This can be represented in a simplified way as in Figure 4.3, where arrows stand for cognitive operations, i.e. manipulation of information.

---

<sup>12</sup> Of course, the bigger the set of data, the bigger the prediction value of the abstraction. The notion of the total of occurrences of a form remains principally an idealization.

Figure 4.3



The final step is the description and motivation of the rules of interpretation of the construction. This means that a description must be given of the interaction of the established meaning and the context that leads to the different uses of the construction.

In this section I have argued that the DI-construction can best be analyzed in a compositional way. This means that in order to analyze the DI-construction it is necessary to define the meanings of the different constituents in the construction: dative, infinitive, *bylo* and *budet*. In the following sections I will discuss the meanings of these constituents. In 4.3 I will discuss the dative, in 4.4 I the infinitive, and in 4.5 the meaning of *byt'*. In 4.6 I will discuss the composition of these constituents, the abstract meaning of the construction and the semantic-syntactic structure of the construction.

### 4.3 The dative

In this section I will give a short description of the meaning of the dative in constructions without preposition (*datel'nyj bezpredložnyj*). I will first give some examples of the use of the dative in Russian, and then say something about the abstract meaning of the dative. Finally I will make a few comments on the status of the dative in constructions where it can be analyzed as a so-called 'dative subject'.

#### 4.3.1 Functions and meaning of the dative

In Russian, the dative without preposition can have different functions in the sentence. Zaichkova (1972) distinguishes six semantic-syntactic functions, viz. (i) the dative

occurring with a verb in the function of ‘subject’ or ‘object’, (ii) the dative occurring in different constructions with the impersonal verb *byt’* in the function of ‘object’ or ‘subject’, (iii) the dative occurring with nouns, (iv) the dative occurring in elliptical constructions, (v) ethical datives, (vi) the dative occurring with particles. Some examples of these functions are given below (the examples are taken from Zaichkova (1972), unless otherwise indicated):

*Dative ‘object’ of finite verb (indirect object, benefactive object)*

- (24) On **mne** dal knigu  
he I-DAT gave book  
‘He gave me the book.’
- (25) On sh’et **ej** kostjum.  
he sews she-DAT costume  
‘He is sewing a costume for her.’
- (26) Il’ja Ivanych rasplatilsja za pivo i grustno pozhal **mne** ruku. (Zoshchenko, 1935)  
Il’ja Ivanych payed for beer and sadly shook I-DAT hand  
‘Ilja Ivanych paid for his beer, and sadly shook my hand.’

*Dative ‘subject’ of finite verb*

- (27) **Mne** ne spitsja.  
I-DAT not sleep-3SG-REFL  
‘I can’t sleep.’

*Dative in impersonal constructions with *byt’* in the function of ‘subject’*

- (28) **Mne** xolodno.<sup>13</sup>  
I-DAT cold-ADV  
‘I feel cold.’

*Dative in construction with noun (expressing the ‘indirect object’ of the noun)*

- (29) prikaz **komu**

---

<sup>13</sup> In this case the verb *byt’* is not expressed, but it can be expressed in the past or future tense.

*Meaning and interpretation of the DI-construction*

order who-DAT  
'order to someone'

- (30) oskorblenie **komu**  
insult someone-DAT  
'insult to someone'

*Ethical dative*

- (31) No on zhe **mne** ne chuzhoj chelovek! – skazala Alisa.<sup>14</sup> (K. Bulychev, *Izlučatel' dobroty*)  
but he PRT I-DAT not strange man! (...)  
'“But he isn't a stranger to me!”, said Alisa.'
- (32) Prishel on **tebe** domoj, vse dveri nastezh'. (Jakobson, 1995: 359)  
came he you-DAT home, all doors wide.open  
'He came home on you, all the doors wide open.'

*Dative in 'elliptical' construction*

- (33) Vse bogatstva – **mne**!<sup>15</sup> (N. Alenev, *Lesnaja skazka*)  
all richness – I-DAT  
'All richness – for me!'
- (34) Mir **xizhinam**, vojna **dvorcam**! (Paustovskij, *Nachalo nevedomogo veka*)  
peace-NOM huts-DAT, war-NOM palaces-DAT  
'Peace to the huts, war to the palaces!'

*Dative occurring with 'particle'*

- (35) Vot **tebe** den'gi.  
PRT you-DAT money  
'Here is the money.'
- (36) Byli u professora den'gi? – Zachem **emu** den'gi? poslyshalsja golos Ichun'. – Esli emu chto-nibud' bylo nužno, vse srazu prisylali iz goroda.<sup>16</sup> (K. Bulychev, *Izlučatel' dobroty*)

---

<sup>14</sup> [http://sf.glasnet.ru:8105/kb/stories/izlučatel\\_dobroty/text-02.htm](http://sf.glasnet.ru:8105/kb/stories/izlučatel_dobroty/text-02.htm)

<sup>15</sup> <http://inache.karelia.ru:8084/skazka.html>

<sup>16</sup> [http://sf.glasnet.ru:8105/kb/stories/izlučatel\\_dobroty/text-02.htm](http://sf.glasnet.ru:8105/kb/stories/izlučatel_dobroty/text-02.htm)

(...) why he-DAT money? – (...)

“Did the professor have money? What would he need that for?”, said the voice of Ichun’. “If he needed something, they immediately sent it to him from town.”

As I will argue below, all these cases of the dative share features, viz. the participant expressed in the dative is an experiencer or recipient. This abstract meaning is interpreted differently, depending on the semantic-syntactic context in which the dative form occurs. In many cases it is not possible to draw strict boundaries for different usage types of the dative, which points at the fact that all dative uses share basic features. I will not go into the specific function of the dative in the sentences given above, but will first discuss the meaning of the dative in general. Finally I will say something about the function of the dative as a subject.

In the literature there has been much debate concerning the question of whether case must be analyzed as a semantic category, or as a purely syntactic category without semantic basis. One of the earliest semantic theories about the Russian case system is given by Jakobson [1936], while ‘syntactically’ based theories of case proceed from the work of Chomsky. Analyses based on Chomsky start out from the following two principles, viz. (i) case is determined by syntactic structure, that is, particular verbs or prepositions assign a particular case to a form, and (ii) case has no influence on the semantic interpretation of sentences. In my analysis I will focus on the semantic basis of case, but I would like to stress that convention plays an important part in case assignment. This means that a semantic analysis of case must be seen as a motivation and systematization of and behind linguistic norms, rather than as a rule-based explanation.

Jakobson assumes three important principles in his study of the Russian case system, viz. (i) cases have meaning, (ii) every case has exactly one (general) meaning and different context-dependent uses or interpretations, and (iii) the meaning of the different cases (nominative, genitive, dative, accusative, instrumental, locative) must be described in opposition to the other cases in the system. More specifically, cases are described in terms of the markedness principle, that is, in terms of the obligatory signalling of the presence of a feature *x* (marked for *x*), or the absence of such an obligatory signalling (unmarked for *x*). The features employed by Jakobson in his work on case [1936], are ‘directedness’, ‘scope’, ‘status’ and ‘shaping’.

Jakobson analyzes the meaning of the dative as follows: “[I]t signifies peripheral status, like the I [instrumental], and involvement in an action, like the A [accusative]. Thus the D [dative] has been defined as the case of the indirect object or the auxiliary object” (1995: 357). Jakobson further argues that the dative participant must be seen as

a recipient (Jakobson: 1995 [1936]: 359). According to him, one can speak of a recipient if “an action, or more exactly a state of affairs, is experienced as independent of the activity of the experiencer”. The idea of a recipient is also clear in Jakobson’s description of the dative as denoting the existence of its referent as independent of the action (1995: 358).

The meaning of the dative given by Jakobson must be seen as a general meaning or invariant; hence the description of the dative is said to apply in all the different dative uses. To give an example, in the case of the ethical dative, verbs that are not normally associated with indirect objects are assigned an extra role because of the meaning of the dative. Jakobson (1990: 359) argues that the function of the dative in such cases is to indicate that the participant expressed by the pronoun is a recipient, because the participant expressed in the dative is perceived “as if he were affected by the action, as if it had even taken place with reference to him”. Although Jakobson (1990) illustrates the meaning that he gives with many examples, the way in which the general meaning must be interpreted, and the exact status of the different features used in the description, remains in some cases unexplained.

An up-to-date approach to case meaning is given by Wierzbicka (1986), who discusses the dative in Polish. She proposes that the dative case be described in terms of a *core meaning*. She further argues that the dative core meaning is similar across languages, but the extensions from this basic meaning differ from language to language. She argues (1986: 387) that the core meaning of the dative can be identified with its use as it occurs with verbs like *give*; she offers the following description for this *core meaning*: “X did something with thing Y; wanting person Z to come to have it; something happened to Y because of that; one could assume that Z would come to have Y because of that”. After careful investigation of different uses of the dative in Polish, Wierzbicka (1986: 419) further concludes that all the dative cases in Polish have something in common, viz. the idea that the dative implies a situation which is not controlled by a person Z but which is likely (though not certain) to have an effect on him.

In my description of the dative I wish to focus on the idea of ‘being affected’. The idea of ‘being affected’ is also part of other descriptions of the dative meaning in different languages, for example in the notion of ‘active experiencer’ used by Langacker (1991b: 236–254). The notion of ‘affectedness’ or ‘active experiencer’ can be illustrated with the sentence (24) above. In this sentence the dative participant can be seen as a recipient because he is actively involved in the act of giving, he is ‘affected’ by this act, without initiating this act, that is, being the agent of the action. This differs from the

role of the participant in the case of the accusative, where no active involvement is required and where the participant is not necessarily affected, e.g.:

- (37) Ja videl ego.  
I-NOM saw him-ACC  
'I saw him.'

In this case the patient of the action does not have to be aware that he is the object of some action; put differently, he is not actively involved or affected. The idea of active experienter, or being affected is not clearly present in all instances of the dative, especially in cases where the dative participant is a non-animate entity. In such cases, the idea of 'effect' is connected with the idea of *coming into effect*. This can be illustrated with the word *konec* ('end') that can occur with a dative if it is used in an abstract sense, and has the function of subject or object of the sentence (Zaichkova, 1972: 55); compare:

- (38) I nastupil vse-taki **konec ego muchen'jam**.  
and came in.the.end end his sufferings-DAT  
'And finally in the end there came an end to his suffering.'
- (39) Chasy pokazyvali **konec rabochego dnja**.  
clocks showed end work-GEN day-GEN  
'The clocks showed the end of the working day.'

With *konec* ('end') the dative is used in those cases where the coming into being of the final phase of some temporal phenomenon is concerned, possibly as the result of an external force, whereas the genitive is used in those cases where the final phase is portrayed as an (inherent) feature of the phenomenon in question. In the sentence with the dative, the phenomenon in question is conceptualized as a dynamic phenomenon, that is, we conceptualize the transition from the moment where there is no end to the suffering to the moment where such an end exists. This dynamic character is absent in the case of the genitive.

In the definitions of the dative given by Jakobson and Wierzbicka the emphasis lies on the affected nature of the dative participant. The affected nature presupposes that there is some force or agent that can be seen as the affecting force. This presupposition is more clearly expressed in the definition of the dative given in Zaichkova (1972: 82); she defines the meaning of the dative in Russian as goal-oriented

directedness (*celevaja napravlennost'*). The idea of 'goal-directedness' is clear in sentences such as *On mne dal knigu* ('he gave me the book'). In this sentence the subject (*on*) can be seen as a participant that performs an action directed at the dative participant. This means that the goal of the action is that the dative participant will receive the object of the action. In some constructions the idea of 'goal-directedness' has a more abstract character because there is no identifiable participant that can be seen as the goal-directed force. This is the case for example in constructions with a dative subject and an adverbial predicate, as in (28). In this sentence the dative participant can be seen as the experiencer of the state expressed by the predicate that is induced by an abstract force such as circumstances, the weather, etc.

Considering the different uses of the dative in Russian, I think it can best be described in terms of a basic meaning and extensions of this basic meaning. As cases occur in a relatively clear-cut *system* of cases, it can be expected that the choice of case and the conventionalization of use of case must be described in terms of choosing the *optimal* case from the case system, since optimization in terms of basic uses accounts for the relative stability of the case system (see Chapter II for a more general discussion of stability and polysemy). I would like to propose that the following three *interrelated* features constitute the *basic* meaning of the dative in Russian:

- (i) There is some force directed at Y.
- (ii) Y is potentially affected by this force.
- (iii) The potential effect (potentially) results in a dynamic scene ('receiving', 'coming into effect').

Besides basic uses there are *peripheral* uses. This notion is a *theoretical* notion, in the sense that the peripheral status is not based on psychological evidence or evidence from judgments of language users, but on theoretical criteria. Peripheral uses can be described and analyzed as uses where some features present in the basic dative meaning are weakened or changed because of the context in which the dative occurs. Peripheral uses are exemplified by cases where the force that is directed at the dative participant is not expressed, and where the dative is an inanimate entity. An example is given below:

- (40) Vsem cvetam cvety. (A. Velichko, 1996: 15)  
all-DAT flowers-DAT flowers  
'The best flowers of all.'

Here we find an instance of the construction [*usem* + noun<sub>plural-dative</sub> + noun<sub>nominative</sub>] which expresses that the noun in the nominative (x) is considered by the speaker to be the best example of the universal set of x; in this sentence there is no identifiable or expressed force directed at the phenomenon expressed in the dative, and the dative noun is an inanimate entity. I will not go into this construction here but will offer a suggestion as to how this use of the dative might be motivated. In this sentence the speaker expresses that for all flowers the following statement applies: the contextually given flowers are *the* flowers, that is, the *best* flowers. The speaker can be seen as a force directed at all flowers since he makes a statement concerning all flowers; this presupposes an information state where it is not known that the statement in question applies to all flowers. Similar ‘abstract’ instances of ‘affectedness’ can be found with some uses of the DI-construction that occur with overt subordinators like *chtoby*, *pered tem kak* and *esli*, as in (9)–(11) given above. In my analysis I will argue that the occurrence of the dative in these cases is facilitated by the context in which it occurs, more specifically the meaning of the subordinators, and that the idea of ‘recipient’ occurs in these cases in a weakened form. If we take this point of view, we can motivate the specific distribution of the dative, and point at semantic and syntactic similarities between the DI-construction and constructions with the second dative. Such a motivation is not provided in the generative literature. The occurrence of the datives in sentences like these is normally treated in the generative literature as a ‘syntactic phenomenon’ where the experiencer semantics of the dative is presumed not to play a part in the occurrence. Schoorlemmer (1995: 64), for example, distinguishes sentences with a so-called structural dative from sentences with an experiencer semantics dative and claims that they are not connected to each other. As I will discuss later, this is an unsatisfactory conclusion, which leads to inaccurate syntactic analyses and the failure of unifying phenomena that are formally unified.

I do not think it is possible to predict the range of uses of the dative on the basis of the three features I gave above. It is possible, however, to *understand* the dative on the basis of these features and the context in which the dative occurs. Furthermore, it may be that particular regularities in the use of the dative can be observed.<sup>17</sup> A complete

---

<sup>17</sup> It would be interesting to study the change in the use of the dative in Russian, to see whether it must be attributed to a change in basic meaning of the dative or not. In older stages of Russian, up to the nineteenth century, the dative stood in opposition to the genitive case in contexts where in modern Russian a genitive is required. (see Vinogradov & Shvedova, 1964: 157–172). Consider the following sentence: *Lož ej [rybe] ne načinalsja esbče* (Vinogradov & Shvedova, 1964: 163/ Golovn.), (catch they-DAT not started yet, ‘The catching of the fish has not started yet’). The occurrence of the dative in this sentence can be motivated as follows: the fisher can be seen as a force that is directed at the catching of the fish, which means that the fish is affected by the catcher (resulting in the ‘fished’ state of the fish). In modern Russian

description of the dative in Russian must list all the different usage types for the dative and point out regularities, while at the same time defining the basic use of the dative; it must also state how the dative differs from other cases. Finally, whether some participant of an action expressed by a verb is expressed in the dative is, at least partly, a matter of convention, and must therefore be listed in the valency structure of the verb. A complete analysis of all the different uses of the dative case is beyond the scope of this research. I have confined myself to formulating the meaning of the dative insofar as it is relevant for my study. In the next section I will make a few remarks on the use of the dative as a so-called ‘subject’.

#### **4.3.2 The dative as a so-called ‘subject’**

In the DI-construction the dative is interpreted as the potential agent of the infinitive situation. Some scholars (e.g. Zaichkova, 1972; Schoorlemmer, 1995; Komar, 1999) call the dative in the DI-construction a *subject*. The interpretation of the dative as a subject may be based on different theoretical principles, which I will not go into here. In my opinion the syntactic classification of the dative as a ‘subject’ can be based on two different criteria: (i) the same construction can be interpreted differently depending on the syntactic function assigned to the dative; this accounts for a syntactic classification *as such*, and (ii), the function of the dative in the DI-construction, and other similar constructions, shares particular features with nominative *subjects*, which accounts for the use of the term *subject* for some uses of the dative. I will briefly discuss these criteria below.

The difference between the ‘subject’ function of the dative and the ‘indirect object’ function can be elucidated with the following instance of the DI-construction:

---

a genitive is required here (Vinogradov & Shvedova, 1964: 163); this means that the catching is portrayed as a property of the fish. This diachronic change can possibly be seen as part of a larger group of similar phenomena. During the course of the nineteenth century the use of the dative with nouns was confined to specific syntactic contexts, viz. (a) as the specification of the predicate with nouns like *drug* (‘friend’), e.g. *on drug bratu* (‘he a friend of my brother’), (b) in constructions like *dat’ nachalo delu* (‘to start something’), and (c) with nouns that express direction, appeal, etc., e.g. *svjala gerojam* (‘praise of the heroes’), *pozor ubijce* (‘shame on the murderess’). There seems to be a diachronic tendency in Russian to use the dative in those cases where it is part of the predicate of the sentence (see Vinogradov & Shvedova, 1964: 14.) At the beginning of the nineteenth century it was still possible to use words like *drug* (‘friend’) in the dative as a specification of a noun in non-predicative contexts (Vinogradov & Shvedova, 1964: 171), whereas by the end of the nineteenth century this use had become obsolete. It may be that the dative became reserved for predicative contexts because in such sentences the idea of recipienthood was more strongly felt.

- (41) Tebe nalit'? (Maurice, 1996: 91)  
 you-DAT pour-INF-PERF?

In this construction the dative could – *hypothetically speaking* – be interpreted in two ways, viz. (i) as the indirect object of the verb ('Shall I pour you?'), (ii) as the potential agent of the infinitive situation ('Will you pour?'); the first interpretation is pragmatically the more likely and is chosen by the language user.

In the case of the 'indirect object' interpretation the participant expressed by the dative is portrayed as a participant to which an action with an identifiable subject (in this case the speaker) is directed. For this interpretation the following informal analysis can be given:

- nalit'*: 'to pour'; valency structure: subject (who poured?), object (what is poured?), indirect object (for whom is poured?)
- indirect object: dative
  - object: non-specified
  - subject: because of the infinitive mood non-specified, but associated with the speaker

In the case of the so-called 'subject' interpretation the participant expressed by the dative is portrayed as a participant that is the recipient of the situation expressed by the infinitive. In this case the force that assigns this situation to the dative participant has no clearly identifiable character. The following informal analysis can be given for this interpretation:

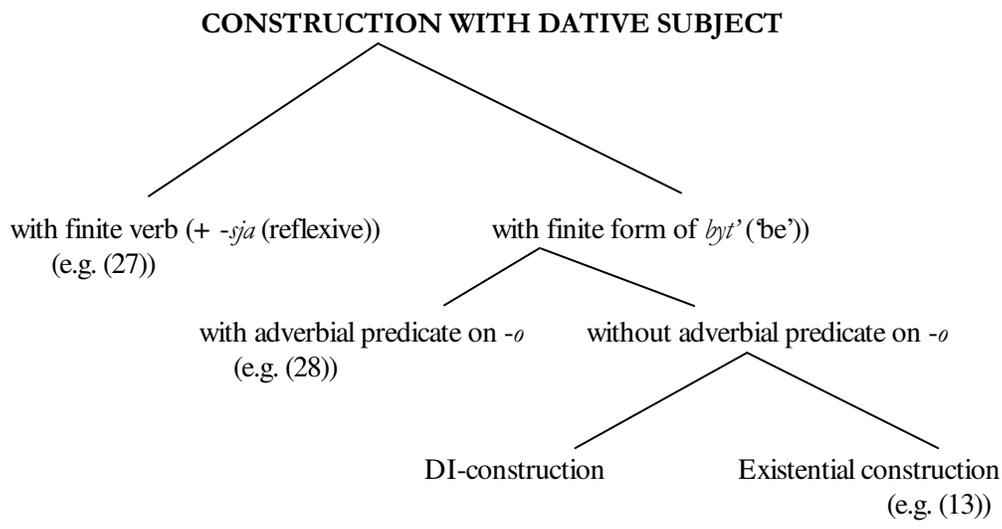
- nalit'*: 'to pour'; valency structure: subject (who poured?), object (what is poured?), indirect object (for whom is poured?)
- indirect object: non-specified
  - object: non-specified
  - subject: because of the infinitive mood non-specified, but associated with the dative

Since the dative participant can be seen as the potential *agent* of the infinitive situation, and no other entity with agentive properties is expressed or implied in the construction, the dative is sometimes called the dative *subject*.

The interpretation of the dative as a 'subject' also occurs in other constructions where no nominative subject of the finite verb is expressed, and where the dative participant

is the recipient of some state that has no subject, or at least no identifiable subject. The relation between the DI-construction and other constructions with a dative ‘subject’ is shown in the tree in Figure 4.4.

Figure 4.4



As is shown in Figure 4.4, a main division can be made between those sentences where there is a finite verb and the reflexive suffix *-sja*, and those cases where the finite element is expressed by the neuter form of *byt'* ('be'). Sentences where the finite verb can be identified with *byt'* ('be') can be subdivided into cases with an adverbial predicate on *-o*, and cases without adverbial predicate on *-o*.<sup>18</sup> Cases without adverbial predicate are exemplified by the DI-construction. Cases without adverbial predicate on *-o* are exemplified by the existential construction (e.g. (13)); in this construction the interrogative can be seen as the predicate of the sentence.

What these cases have in common is that the dative participant is the experiencer of a situation that has no nominative subject, or agent with a clearly identifiable character. The non-identifiable character of the subject of the situation means that the dative participant

---

<sup>18</sup> Cases with an adverbial predicate can be further subdivided into particular cases with modal predicates (*mozħno*, *nado*, *nuzħno*) and other predicates. As I will argue in 4.5, this difference is connected with the semantic-syntactic status of the predicate and the verb *byt'* ('be').

is more highlighted, or put differently, more ‘profiled’ (Langacker, 1991), than in sentences where it functions as a so-called indirect object. In the case of the dative use under discussion, the prominent status of the dative participant is further underlined by the association of the dative participant with an *agentive* role.

In the DI-construction (1)–(7), and in the so-called existential construction (13), the dative has an agentive role because he can be seen as the *potential* agent of some situation. This means that these constructions imply (the absence of) a scene where the dative participant realizes the infinitive situation.

In constructions with a reflexive finite verb (27) the participant is associated with an agentive role because he intends to realize a situation, in which he does not succeed; instead another action is induced by the circumstances.

In other constructions the association of the dative subject with an agentive role may be more abstract. This is the case for example in sentences with an adverbial predicate on *-o*, such as in (28) above, where the dative participant experiences some feeling induced by the cold temperature. In this sentence the ‘agentive’ role is connected with the fact that the dative participant is actively involved in the situation, the cold temperature may for example give rise to a bodily sensation, without being an actual agent; the bodily sensation is the result of an external force. Note that not all adverbs can occur as predicates with a dative subject (Schoorlemmer, 1994: 140), e.g.:

- (42) \*Nam bylo krasivo.  
we-DAT was-IMPERS beautiful-ADV

The property ‘krasivyj’ is conceptualized as an inherent property of some thing, and cannot be conceptualized as having an effect on some participant (‘we found it beautiful’). This phenomenon is part of a larger group of similar phenomena; that is, there are similar adverbs that cannot be used as predicates, or particular modifications are necessary in order to use such an adverb as a predicate. For a further discussion, I refer to Zaitseva (1990: 215–229), who describes the conditions for the dative NP in impersonal constructions in Russian.

Whether the prominent status of the dative participant in the cases discussed above is enough to classify it as a subject, is, in some way, a senseless question, because it depends on the particular definition of subject. A possible reason to speak of a dative subject is to do credit to the fact that that nominative subjects and so-called dative subjects share semantic features, which can account for some observed phenomena I mentioned earlier such as gerund binding and anaphoric binding. Other features that point to similarities with nominative subjects are the tendency of the dative to occupy the first position in the

clause, and probably other features that are related to the topical status of the dative. Nevertheless, I would like to stress that dividing the use of the dative into different semantic-syntactic functions is to some extent only a theoretical issue, which, in my opinion, cannot be adequately defined. This can be illustrated with the following construction without verb, where the event suggested by the combination of the dative and the noun has already taken place:

- (43) Emu smex – a mne chut' ne infarkt.<sup>19</sup>  
he-DAT laughter-NOM – but I-DAT little not stroke-NOM  
'It made him laugh, but I almost had a stroke.'

I think this construction can best be analyzed as follows. The dative occurs, facilitated by the contrastive nature of the construction, to indicate that the participant expressed in the dative was the recipient of the referent expressed by the noun. The combination of the dative and the noun creates a predicative relationship, that is, the construction expresses that the participant received the thing, or realized the action suggested by the noun. Should the dative in this construction be seen as a subject or not? If the subject is defined as the participant with the highest ranking semantic role, the dative could indeed be seen as a subject, but if the subject is defined as the participant expressed in the nominative, the dative *cannot* be seen as a subject in this case because of the presence of a nominative subject. Cases like these show that the issue of subjecthood is very much a theoretical issue, which cannot be adequately solved. I will, however, use the term dative subject in my analysis, to refer to the use of the dative in the DI-construction, where the potential agent is expressed. The term 'subject' in my analysis can thus not be seen as having any kind of theoretical implications in the sense of Generative Grammar (cf. Komar, 1999, on the status of subjecthood in formal frameworks).

#### **4.4 The infinitive**

In this section I will discuss the meaning and function of the infinitive. I will start with a general discussion of the meaning of the infinitive. I will argue that the infinitive must be seen as a verb denoting a situation type. I will further propose that some specific 'modal' uses of the infinitive result from the interaction between this abstract meaning and the

---

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.anekdot.ru:8084/an/an9903/t990331.html>

context in which it occurs, and that the differences between infinitives and oppositional forms such as nouns must also be accounted for in terms of the difference in meaning between these parts of speech. Finally, I will give an overview of different uses of the infinitive in the different semantic-syntactic contexts.

#### 4.4.1 Situation type

I agree with Ebeling (1984) that the infinitive denotes in all its different uses a situation type. I use the term ‘situation’ to refer to all the phenomena that are expressed by verbs, such as events, states, etc.; this means that my term ‘situation’ is identical to the term ‘process’ used by Langacker (1991), and the term ‘fact’ used by Ebeling (1984). Because the infinitive denotes a situation, it can evoke the thought of an agent or subject of the situation and the idea of the realization of a situation, unless the lexical meaning of the verb blocks the idea of a subject (in the case of impersonal verbs). In contrast to situations expressed by finite verbs, the infinitive does not refer to an individual instantiation of a situation but rather to a situation *type*. Situation types can be seen as abstractions from individual occurrences of situations that are grouped together on the basis of similarity. In contrast to individual situations, which are expressed by finite verbs, the infinitive does not express person, number, or tense. The only grammatical information expressed by the infinitive is aspect, which is connected with the internal structure of the situation; some authors also treat the reflexive suffix *-sja* as grammatical information (voice). Apart from the absence of a grammatical subject, the Russian infinitive has the normal valence of finite verbs.

The absence of inflection for person, tense, and gender is connected with the type character of the infinitive. In the case of the infinitive, features that are associated with the realization of the situation by a specific person, at a particular moment in time are abstracted, resulting in those features that the individual situation shares with other similar individual situations. Because of the type character of the infinitive, the infinitive shares features with parts of speech that denote referents or things, such as nouns. It is typical of situations that they occupy a unique position in time and space, whereas things can occupy different positions in time and space. Infinitives, however, differ from nouns because they are associated with an agentive role if the verb is personal; as such they can function both as predicate and complement (see 4.4.3).

The description of infinitives as a situation type, resulting from the cognitive manipulation of abstracting from the individual properties of the situation such that types can be constructed, is in accordance with the description given by Langacker (1991b: 82)

for the English infinitive. According to Langacker, in the case of the infinitive the sequential scanning of the verb stem is suspended, which means that the processual predication of the stem is converted into an atemporal relation. It is not clear to me, however, whether the cognitive strategy to construct situation types must be seen as based on some *visual* capacity. It could for example also be argued that the suspension of the sequential scanning is the *result* of viewing the situation as a type. Furthermore, I do not think that the verbal character of parts of speech such as infinitives is solely constituted by the cognitive manipulation of ‘sequential scanning’ (Langacker, 1991b). In my opinion the main reason that infinitives are verbal in nature, and can as such be seen as verbs, is that they are always associated with the idea of the *realization* of the situation and hence with an agent or subject of this realization if the verb is personal (see 3.1, for the discussion of the status of verbs). In the case of situations such as actions we focus on the relation in time between the agent of the action and the action itself. We perceive a scene as an action because we conceptualize the entity as expending energy over time such that an event takes place in time. This means that it is not only the sequential scanning which is relevant, but the whole of agenthood, realization, and time.

The conceptualization of the infinitive event as having an agent means that the subject of the action must be identified with some agent present in the context (cf. Zolotova, 1982: 254–255). If no specific agent is available in the context, the nature of the agent will be non-specific. This non-specific nature of the infinitive agent in such contexts is the result of the type character of the infinitive. An example of this can be found in sentences such as *Katat'sja veselo* (skate-INF fun-ADV; ‘It’s fun to skate’), where the infinitive applies to unspecified agents (‘Generally, it’s fun to perform the action of skating’). In some contexts, however, the agent of the action may be associated with a specific agent. This is the case for example in sentences like *On nachal ucit'sja* (‘He started to study’). As a result of the relation that is made between the infinitive and a specific agent, the infinitive refers in this sentence to a situation that is definite. The individualized character of the infinitive in its context must be seen as an interpretation and not as part of the meaning of the infinitive.

The process of unification of the infinitive agent with a specific agent in the context may very well be partly conventional; that is, it has to be learned by the language user, and does not follow from our cognitive make-up. This is not to say that these conventions cannot be reconstructed as primarily ‘pragmatic’ in nature, that is, based on common sense. In the case of the sentences *On nachal čitat'* (‘He began to read.’); *On ljubit čitat'* (‘He likes to read.’) the agent present in the context is the agent

of the finite verb. The presence of this agent in the syntactic context may be the sole reason that we interpret the agent of the infinitive as identical to the agent of the finite verb. In other contexts, other agents may be more plausible candidates. This is the case for example in sentences where the finite verb occurs with an indirect object, as in *On velel emu priexat* ('He ordered him to come'). In this case the only plausible candidate for the agent of the infinitive is the same referent as the indirect object. If the subject of the finite verb was interpreted to be the agent, this should lead to the pragmatically odd interpretation where someone orders someone else that he himself would do something.

Of course, this is by no means a complete analysis, but it does suggest that syntactic conventions may very well have a semantic-pragmatic ground. In generative analyses the association of the infinitive agent with a specific agent is described in terms of positing an underlying element in the sentence, called PRO, that can have case (e.g. Comrie, 1974) or be assigned case (e.g. Franks, 1990). In my opinion, the non-expressed subject of the infinitive cannot be seen as an individual subject that can have case, since it must be seen as an abstraction over individual subjects, which means that we cannot conceptualize PRO as a specific entity. In some cases, however, the non-expressed infinitive subject may be associated with an expressed participant. For the unification of the non-specified infinitive agent with some participant, I think an analysis in a model such as Optimality Theory would be suitable (for references I refer the reader to Archangeli & Langendoen, 1997).

In the literature it is often remarked that the infinitive expresses so-called 'subjective modal' nuances such as unexpectedness, wish, desire, etc. or objective modal nuances such as necessity or possibility. Some scholars (e.g. Růzhichka, 1994) try to attribute a modal meaning to the infinitive, but the status and interpretation of this modal 'meaning' remains unclear. Ebeling (1984: 128) proposes to account for such uses in his definition of the meaning of the infinitive, viz. "the Russian infinitive presents a fact as a member of a pair of facts [situations], the relation between the two being 'accompanying'". In my opinion Ebeling's description cannot be seen as the *meaning* of the infinitive, but must be seen as a description that defines the range of possible interpretations of the abstract meaning 'situation type'. I think it is best to see the specific 'modal' use of the infinitive as an interpretation of the more abstract meaning 'situation type'. This means that the infinitive itself has no modal meaning, but can be used to express modal notions, and other related notions, in a specific context.

In some contexts, for example, the infinitive is interpreted as expressing unexpectedness. This interpretation can indeed be described in terms of 'two situations':

the conceptualization of a situation as a type may point to the need to contrast the situation with some other situation. An example of an interpretation where a part is played by the notion of ‘contrast’ or ‘unexpectedness’ occurs in the nominative-infinitive construction, exemplified by the following sentence:

- (44) Ja pod zemlej byl, kak raz u sebja v inženernyx sooruzhenijax, vdrug – bums – zemlja drognula. U menja v odnom meste v tonnele s potolka pesok stal sypats’ja. **Ja – bezhat’ iz-pod zemli.**<sup>20</sup> (Veles i Kompanija, *Nevoennaja xronika soldatskoj sluzhby*)  
(...) I – run-INF from under the ground  
‘I was under the ground, when in the engineers building suddenly – boom! – the ground was shaking. In one of the parts of the tunnel sand started falling from the ceiling. I started to run from under the ground.’

This sentence has a so-called ingressive interpretation, indicating the beginning of an unexpected action. I think Ebeling (1984: 119–120) gives an appropriate analysis for such cases. He argues that in such sentences the infinitive presupposes the idea of a contrast with an expected action in the narration. A similar interpretation can be found in the following sentence:

- (45) Kak priedet – spat’.<sup>21</sup> (L. Leonov, *Barsuki*)  
when comes home – sleep-INF-IMPERF  
‘When he comes home – goes to sleep.’

In this sentence the infinitive indicates the action that the subject will engage in as soon as some other action is completed. The preceding context (*kak priedet*) already presupposes the question ‘what type of action will the subject do?’; the infinitive fills in the identity of the action, and does not convey what was already presupposed, viz. the idea that the subject will engage in some action.

A different interpretation can be found in cases that express notions such as direction or permission. Consider the following sentence:

- (46) Molchat’!  
be.silent-INF  
‘Be silent.’

---

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.litera.ru:8085/slova/veles/veles2.htm>

<sup>21</sup> <http://moshkov.orsk.ru/Library/lat/LEONOWL/barsuki.txt>

The modal nature of this sentence must not be sought in some modal feature that is part of the infinitive form. Instead, it is preferable to account for such cases by looking at the interaction between the meaning ‘situation type’ and the context in which the infinitive occurs. In this sentence the infinitive is used as a directive, an interpretation that can be motivated as follows: if the speaker expresses the idea of a particular situation type in the context where there is some addressee who does not perform the infinitive action, a possible interpretation is that the speaker expresses that in the given circumstances the infinitive action (and as such no other situation type) applies or is the case. Because the agent given in the context is the addressee, the non-specified infinitive agent is unified with the addressee, and because the agent is not performing the infinitive action, the infinitive is interpreted as a directive. Note that this explanation presupposes that the idea of ‘is the case’, or ‘applies’, is naturally inferred if the infinitive is used in a context where it is not embedded in a syntactic context with a finite verb. In my opinion, this is the most neutral predicative meaning of any form that can enter into a predicative relationship. An example from English would be an utterance like ‘beautiful weather’, which is interpreted as ‘It is beautiful weather’, and not, for example, ‘I hope that in two days it will be beautiful weather’.

There are further regularities in the use of the dative in Russian, which cannot be attributed to the meaning of ‘situation type.’ Ebeling (1984: 102) remarks that in the case of predicates indicating modal attitudes (e.g. *xočet’* (‘to want’), *ljubit’* (‘to love’), *dolžben* (‘must’), *sobirat’sja* (‘to be going to’)) the infinitive situation is necessarily ‘indefinite’, that is, the infinitive cannot refer to a situation that takes place at the same time as the situation expressed by the finite verb.<sup>22</sup> Compare the following sentences from Russian and Dutch respectively:

- (47) Roland dumal uvidet’ v apteke sovsem ne to, chto uvidel.  
 Roland thought see-INF-PERF in chemist’s shop at.all not that, what saw  
 ‘Roland didn’t expect to see at all in the chemist’s shop what he saw.’
- (48) Roland dacht iets ongewoons in de apotheek te zien.  
 Roland thought something unusual in the chemist’s.shop to see-INF  
 ‘Roland thought he saw something unusual in the chemist’s shop.’

---

<sup>22</sup> An exception to this rule is the construction *byt’ + rad* (‘happy’) + infinitive, where the infinitive refers to an action that takes place at the same time as the state expressed by the predicate and the verb *byt’*. I do not think it is correct to account for the impossibility of sentences like (48) in Russian in terms of the infinitive meaning (cf. Ebeling, 1984, for such an approach).

In Russian the infinitive in the construction with *dumat'* ('think') expresses an action that the subject expects to do in the future, whereas in Dutch the infinitive is interpreted as an action that takes place at the same time as the action expressed by the finite verb. To obtain a similar interpretation in Russian, one has to use a subordinate clause introduced with *chto* ('that'): *on dumal chto*. In my opinion, regularities like these do not imply that the meaning of the infinitive has to be changed such that the definition can predict them. I think it is best to say that the infinitive means 'situation type', but that the actual way in which this meaning can be used is conventional, and must therefore be described in the semantic description. This points to the relevance of taking the meaning of constructions into account in the linguistic description.

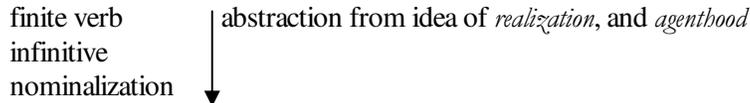
#### **4.4.2 Infinitives versus nominalizations**

As I have argued, the infinitive is a verb with a type character. The verbal nature of the infinitive accounts for its specific use and the differences in use between the infinitive and non-verbal parts of speech, such as nouns that denote 'things' or 'referents'. The definition of the term 'thing' is an intricate problem, because it is not clear to what extent this notion must be seen as a language specific or language dependent notion, or whether a language independent definition can be given that is based on general cognitive capacities of humans, such as the capacity to construe Gestalts. Langacker (1991b: 20) defines the term 'thing' quite broadly to refer to a "region in some domain".<sup>23</sup> To obtain a better insight into the difference between verbs and nouns it is useful to look at the difference in meaning between infinitives and their closest oppositional forms from the domain of nouns, the nominalizations. Langacker (1991b: 98–99) argues that the difference in meaning between nominalizations and verbs in English (for example *explode* versus *explosion*) can be attributed to the fact that they employ different images to structure the same conceptual event: *explode* imposes a processual construal on the profiled event, while *explosion* portrays it as an abstract region. Following Langacker's line of thought, the infinitive of *explode* imposes a processual construal where the sequential scanning is suspended, whereas the nominalization *explosion* portrays the event as an abstract region.

---

<sup>23</sup> Problematic in this definition is that ontological and epistemic categories are confused in the linguistic terminology. Although things always take up some region, they *are* not regions; at different times things can be at quite different regions. But this is only a matter of terminology; I agree with Langacker that the difference between noun and verbs is connected with a difference in conceptualization or 'construal'.

In my opinion, an important difference between nouns and verbs is the question of whether the particular conceptualization abstracts from the idea of *agenthood* and *realization*:



Although I think that an analysis of the difference between verbs and nouns in terms of strategies of abstraction from the notion of realization and agenthood is correct, it does not fully explain the *specific* differences in use and meaning of the different parts of speech. In order to account for these differences it is best to look at the specific contexts where they can be seen as oppositional forms. Consider the following sentences:

- (49) On ljubit chitat'.  
he likes read-INF-IMPERF  
'He likes to read.'
- (50) On ljubit chtenie.  
he likes read-NOUN  
'He likes reading/ people reading.'
- (51) Ja nachala chitat' s zhadnost'ju, i skoro chtenie uvleklo menja sovershenno. (*Slovar' Russkogo Jazyka*, 1984, IV/ Dostoevskij)  
I began read-INF-IMPERF with craving, and soon reading-NOUN carried away me totally  
'Eagerly, I began to read, and soon the reading carried me totally away.'

In the case of the infinitive (49) the agent of the situation must be identified with the nominative subject of the finite verb, whereas the nominalization (50) does not express the idea of an identifiable agent. The first sentence therefore only expresses that the subject strives to read himself, whereas the second sentence can also mean that the subject likes to listen to other people read. Note furthermore that the nominalization *chtenie* can be used to refer both to a specific instance of a reading event ('the reading') and in the plural to an institutionalized event where someone is reading ('lecture'). This latter interpretation shows more clearly the 'thing' character of the noun, that is, the

abstraction from the idea of a subject, and the conceptualization of the phenomenon in question that can occupy different places in time and space.

The specific difference in meaning between the infinitive and the nominalization can further be illustrated with sentence (51). In this sentence both an infinitive and a noun occur. In the case of the infinitive the focus is on the realization of the action type 'read' by the subject of the finite verb. The subject performs an action that can be seen as the start of the action of reading. Put differently, the action of the subject is directed at, or is part of, the realization of the action expressed by the infinitive. In the case of the nominalization, an instantiation of the action type 'read' is already taking place and is as such established. It can therefore be perceived as a thing, and can function as the subject of a predication. Although the noun (*čtenie*) can be associated with a logical subject (the subject of the corresponding clause), it does not express the idea of *realization* of the action. The logical subject of nouns can therefore only be expressed as an attribute to the thing denoted by the noun (e.g. *čtenija Petra*, lit. the reading of Peter').

In my opinion the difference between the interpretation of the agent in these cases is connected with the fact that the nominalization, in contrast to the infinitive, does not express the idea of *realization*. The infinitive can be used in the context of actions or phenomena that are directed at, or related to, the *realization* or *coming into being* of the situation expressed by the infinitive. Such a conceptualization is absent in the case of the nominalization. In the case of the nominalization the focus is not on the idea of realization, or agenthood, but on the phenomenon as such. This means that the nominalization has a more general character than the infinitive, and is not intimately related to an agent, even if it is given in the context.

The difference between nominalizations and infinitives can further be illustrated with another context where the infinitive and the nominalization stand in opposition, viz. cases where a noun is specified either by an infinitive (a) or by a nominalization in the genitive case (b):

- a. Noun + infinitive
- b. Noun + nominalization-genitive

In the construction [noun + infinitive] the infinitive specifies the noun type in terms of a situation type. The phenomenon expressed by the noun is often interpreted as *directed at/facilitates* the realization or coming into being of the situation expressed by the infinitive. The features of 'directedness' and 'coming into being/realization' can be seen

as two sides of the same coin: because we conceptualize the ‘coming into being/ realization’ of a situation we may infer that the referent of the noun before the infinitive is directed at/ facilitates/ leads to this realization (see also 4.4.4.4). In the construction with the nominalization the phenomenon expressed by the noun is conceptualized as a property of the phenomenon expressed by the nominalization.

If one takes the specific meaning of nouns and infinitives into account, particular regularities observed in the literature can be motivated. Such a regularity is remarked by Bricyn (1990: 143), who says it is surprising that the infinitive can be used as a complement of finite verbs that indicate phasal actions such as *nachat* (‘begin’), but that it cannot be used as the specification of nouns like *nachalo* (‘beginning’):

- (52) a. Ja zhelal rabotat’ → zhelanie rabotat’  
 I wished work-INF → wish-NOUN work-INF  
 ‘I wished to work’ → ‘the wish to work’
- b. Ja mog rabotat’ → vozmozhnost’ rabotat’  
 I could work-INF → possibility-NOUN work-INF  
 ‘I could work’ → ‘the possibility of working’
- c. Ja nachinal rabotat’ → \*nachalo rabotat’  
 I started work-INF → beginning-NOUN work-INF  
 ‘I started to work’ → *not interpretable*

The noun *nachalo*, can, however, be combined with a nominalization in the genitive:

- (52) d. nachalo rabotat’  
 beginning work-NOUN-GEN  
 ‘The beginning of the working.’

I would suggest motivating the regularities mentioned here as follows. One can say *nachalo rabotat* (‘beginning of the working’) because the event of working can be conceptualized as a thing with particular characteristics, such as having a beginning and an end. In this case one cannot use the infinitive (*\*nachalo rabotat*) because the infinitive can only be used if the phenomenon expressed by the noun is directed at the realization of the infinitive, such that we conceptualize the coming into being of the infinitive situation. This reading is not possible with phasal verbs, because the scene of ‘beginning of the working’

presupposes that the working is already taking place.<sup>24</sup> The infinitive can, however, be used with nouns like *vozmožnost*‘, as in (52b), because the possibility can be seen as a phenomenon that enables the carrier of this phenomenon to *realiz* the infinitive action; put differently, the possibility is directed at or facilitates the coming into being of the situation type expressed by the infinitive.<sup>25</sup>

The exact rules of use of infinitives or nominalizations with nouns are quite subtle, and difficult to define. An example of the subtle difference in meaning between the two constructions is exemplified by the following extract where the noun *risk* (‘risk’) occurs first with an infinitive and then with a nominalization:

- (53) Pivo vyvodit iz organizma kancerogennye veshchestva i snizhaet **risk zabolet**’ rakom. Issledovanija japonskix uchenyx pokazali, chto reguljarnoe upotreblenie piva sposobno snizit’ **risk zabolevanija** v 2–3 raza.<sup>26</sup>  
beer removes from organism cancer substance and decreases risk get.ill-INF by.cancer. research by.Japanese scientists showed that regular use of.beer able-ADV decrease-INF risk get.ill-NOUN-GEN in 2–3 times  
‘Beer removes the cancer substance from the organism and decreases the risk of getting cancer. Research conducted by Japanese scientists has shown that regular use of beer can lead to a decrease in the risk of getting ill by 2 or 3 times.’

The noun *zabolevanie* can be used to refer both to an illness, and to the process of getting ill, whereas the infinitive *zabolet*’ refers to the situation of falling ill. I suspect that in the case of the infinitive the focus is more on the idea of *realization* of the process of getting ill by a non-specified agent, whereas the noun is used to focus on the phenomenon,

---

<sup>24</sup> Note that in Dutch the infinitive can be ‘individualized’ by placing the determiner *het* before the infinitive (*begin van het lezen*, beginning of the read-INF, ‘beginning of the reading’). In this construction the infinitive can occur both with an adjective (with flection) and with an adverb (without flection), probably with a difference in meaning (e.g. *het snelle/ snel lezen*, the fast-ADJ read-INF/ fast-ADV read-INF, ‘the fast reading’). The comparison between Dutch and Russian shows that languages may differ as to whether the referent of the infinitive may be individualized; this is possibly due to the different oppositional classes of the language, and the different morphological structure of the language.

<sup>25</sup> Bricyn (1990: 144) notes that the infinitive cannot be used to indicate the situation in which some phenomenon is directed with nouns that indicate physical actions (e.g. *\*nagibanie podnjat*‘; bending take.up-INF versus *nagnut’ sja podnjat*’ bend to take up’). I suspect that this is connected with the fact that the nominalization refers to the situation in abstraction from the idea of an agent, and has as such a more general character. This general character is not in accordance with the specific character of the scene to which one here intends to refer.

<sup>26</sup> <http://beer.artcon.ru:8105/texts/medecine.html>

including the result (having the illness), in abstraction form the idea of an agent. The infinitive therefore has a predicative character, it expresses something like ‘the risk that one gets ill’; this predicative character is absent in the case of the nominalization. The conceptualization of the scene with either an infinitive or a noun is possibly connected with the ‘information structure’ of the text. There may be a tendency to use the nominalization in those cases where the topic of getting ill has already been introduced and established.<sup>27</sup> The exact difference between infinitives and the corresponding nominalizations merits further investigation, but lies beyond the scope of this book.

#### 4.4.3 Complement-specification or predicate

In the sections above I have described the infinitive as a situation type. I think this specific meaning accounts for the difference in meaning and distribution from oppositional forms such as nouns. I have argued that the infinitive expresses the idea of the realization or bringing into being of a situation by a non-specified subject (if the verb is personal). In this section I will argue that this specific meaning accounts for the syntactic functions of the infinitive; I will argue that due to the meaning ‘situation type’, infinitives always occupy a position in-between predicates and complements or specifications.

In the Russian linguistic literature different classifications are given of the use of the infinitive, although usually a main division is made between infinitives that are dependent upon some other constituent, and infinitives that function as the predicate of the sentence. Zolotova (1982: 252–253), for example, makes a three-way division, namely a into (i) dependent infinitives, that is infinitives as complements of finite verbs, (ii) independent infinitives, that is infinitives as complements of adjectival or adverbial predicates, and (iii) infinitive sentences, that is infinitives as predicates. A somewhat different classification is given by Bricyn (1990), who offers a main classification into (i) infinitives occurring with finite verbs, (ii) infinitives occurring with

---

<sup>27</sup> It can be expected that also in this construction there will be a difference between the infinitive and the nominalization, due to the fact that infinitives, unlike nouns, are always associated with a non-expressed agent. In Dutch the difference between nouns and infinitives can be clarified with a similar construction, viz. the difference between *het risico van besmetting* (‘the risk of contamination’), with a noun, and *het risico te besmetten* (‘the risk to contaminate’) with an infinitive. The construction with the infinitive is interpreted as a scene where some unspecified agent realizes the action of ‘contamination’, whereas the construction with the noun can be interpreted as a scene where some other participant contaminates the subject. This underlines the importance of the idea of realization and agenthood in the case of the infinitive, which is absent in the case of the nominalization.

adjectival and adverbial predicates, (iii) infinitives occurring with nouns and infinitives, and (iv) infinitive sentences, that is, cases where the infinitive is the predicate of the sentence.

Although both authors use similar parameters for the classification of the infinitive, they classify different constructions differently. This is the case for example with the existential construction (e.g. (13)), which Zolotova (1982: 253) classifies as an infinitive sentence, whereas Bricyn (1990: 182–193) argues that one cannot speak of an infinitive predicate in the case of this construction. Another example is the construction with an infinitive and no finite verb, given below:

- (54) Strannye ljudi, èti Kresse! Skazat' pri mal'chishke takuju veshch'! (*Russkaja Grammatika*, 1980 II: 376/ Bulgakov)  
strange people, those Cretians! say-INF-PERF at boy such thing!  
'Strange people those Cretians! To say something like that in front of a boy.'

The *Russkaja Grammatika* (1980) treats this construction as an infinitive sentence, but Bricyn (1990) does not discuss such sentences in his section on infinitive sentences. Such differences point at the problematic status of syntactic criteria in the classification of the infinitive.

In my opinion, a classification of the use of the infinitive remains principally an idealization, but nevertheless it is possible to make a main division into cases where the infinitive must be seen as a complement/ specification of a predicate, and cases where the infinitive must be seen as the predicate of the sentence. The division into these main types mirrors the observation that in some cases the infinitive is the subject of some predication, the object of some action or attitude, or the specification of some thing, action or state, whereas in other cases the infinitive is not dependent upon some other constituent, and functions as the predicate of the sentence. In these latter cases the main information that is expressed in the sentence is that the situation type expressed by the infinitive 'is the case', or 'applies to some agent', and the infinitive is 'predicative'. According to the traditional *Russkaja Grammatika*, every utterance must express in some way the category of *predicativity* in order to constitute a sentence. The term 'predicativity' is defined by the Academic Grammar (1980, I: 86) as "the category that relates the utterance to some temporal plan of reality by the whole complex of syntactic and formal means". The term 'predicativity' derives from the word 'predicate', which comes from the Greek logico-philosophical tradition where the *predicate* is defined as the basic part of a *judgment*, that which says something about the *subject*. The

notion of predicate and predicativity can be illustrated with the example given by Ebeling (1978: 231):

- a. The high trees
- b. The trees are high

Ebeling argues that both require the existence of high trees in the appropriate referents, which implies the presence of a situation of which these trees are a part. This situation is characterized by a feature that consists of the fact that the referent of *trees* is identical with the referent of *high*. According to Ebeling the difference between (a) and (b) is that this feature of the situation is explicitly transmitted by (b) but not by (a). This explicitness is typical of the character of a judgment expressed by the predicate.<sup>28</sup> The difference between (a) and (b) can be seen as a difference between a concept and a constellation of concepts that forms a judgment; whereas in (a) the identified referent is 'high trees', in (b) the identified referent is 'tree' about which something is said.<sup>29</sup>

The difference between the function of the infinitive as a specification-complement, and the function of the infinitive as a predicate can be illustrated with the following two sentences:

- (55) Xochu **rabotat'**.  
want-1SG work-INF-IMPERF  
'I want to work.'
- (56) **Rabotat'**!  
work-INF  
'Work!'

In (55) the infinitive can be seen as the object of some attitude, viz. the attitude of wishing. In this case the infinitive can be seen as a complement to a predicate. Such cases express what Ebeling (1984: 101–102) calls 'implicative fact type', that is, the

---

<sup>28</sup> In poetic speech, the mere projection of the referent may constitute the goal of an expression; in such cases the poet invites the reader to imagine particular phenomena, for example to illustrate the setting of an event.

<sup>29</sup> As discussed by Langacker (1991: 174–175), both the predicate-subject relation and the modifier-head relation can be seen as a dependency relation; the predicate/ modifier is always conceptually dependent on the subject/ head, which is conceptually autonomous. The information structure of the sentence reflects the different dependency character of these conceptualizations (see Keijsper, 1985).

working of the subject is not a definite action, but only something that is conditioned or implied by the attitude expressed by the finite verb.

In (56) the infinitive occurs without other constituents, and constitutes a sentence on its own. In this sentence the infinitive expresses that the action type ‘work’ applies in the context. This context is constituted by a directive context, such that the addressee is interpreted as the subject to whom this action type applies. This leads to the interpretation that the addressee is directed to realize the infinitive action. In this case the infinitive cannot be seen as a complement, but rather it functions as a predicate.

It must be stressed that the distinction between these different main types is largely theoretical. In many cases no clear boundaries can be drawn between sentences where the infinitive functions as a complement and sentences where the infinitive functions as a predicate. This can be illustrated with (54), which is classified as an infinitive sentence by the *Russkaja Grammatika* (1980, II: 376); this means that the infinitive can be seen as the predicate of the sentence.

The *Russkaja Grammatika* (1980, II: 375) remarks about such sentences that “in the co-text the infinitive sentence can at the same time express an action or state, and contain an element of judgement, a subjective relation to the action or state. Such sentences, that express a state or action from the perspective of the person who judges, are always a component of a whole text”. The observation made by the *Russkaja Grammatika* stresses that the status of predicate depends heavily on the co-text in which the sentence occurs. As such, this sentence can be compared to a sentence where the infinitive phrase occurs embedded in a syntactic context, e.g.

- (57) **Govorit’ pri mal’chishke takuju veshch’ – ochen’ stranno!**  
say-INF at boy such a thing – very strange  
‘It is very strange to say such a thing in front of a boy.’

In this sentence the infinitive phrase occurs as a component of the sentence, viz. as a subject complement to the predicate *stranno*. The infinitive can therefore be seen both as a complement, and at the same time as a predicate of some contextually given or generally assumed subject. This example illustrates that the difference between the component status and the predicate status is in many cases not clear. The ‘fusion’ between these functions is the result of the fact that the infinitive can be seen both as a verb, and as a type. The verb character implies that the infinitive is always associated with an agent, this means that the infinitive always has a predicative character, even in those cases where it does not function as the predicative element. The type character implies that the verb is

not individualized, but generalized. As such, it can function as a subject, an object, or a specification.

The fusion between the complement role of the infinitive and the predicate role of the infinitive resulting from its action type character has further consequences. One of these is that it is unclear whether an infinitive component constitutes a clause or not. In the literature infinitive complements are sometimes treated as subordinate clauses, even if they do not occur with subordinators. The reason that infinitives are treated as clauses is that they contain an agent/ actor term or a participant term. In the generative literature, this means that an infinitive contains PRO (Model, 1991: 192–193). Here, I will not go into the question of whether and when infinitives can be seen as subordinate clauses. In my opinion, this is a theoretical question that depends on the definition of subordinate clause. In 4.16 I will further consider the question of sentencehood of the infinitive.

Although infinitives do not automatically separate into either complement-specifications or predicates, I will maintain this classification here. It must, however, be remarked that this distinction is a classification into proto-types, and that due to the meaning of the infinitive, borderline cases exist. It must further be remarked that the context in which the infinitive occurs, are important factors in the particular syntactic interpretation of the infinitive. In some cases the infinitive can be seen as the predicate of the sentence, because of the construction in which it occurs (as in the case of the DI-construction): in other cases the interpretation of the infinitive as a predicate is facilitated by the pragmatic context in which the infinitive sentence occurs (as in the case of directive infinitives), and yet in other cases the linguistic context plays an important part (as in (54) above).

#### 4.4.4 Overview and classification of the infinitive

Below I will briefly give some examples of different uses of the infinitive. The following uses can be distinguished, although a different classification remains possible:

##### *Complement or specification*

- (i) Complement of finite predicate
- (ii) (Goal) specification of finite predicate
- (iii) Complement of adverbial predicate/ specification of adjectival predicate
- (iv) (Goal) specification of noun, gerund

*Meaning and interpretation of the DI-construction*

*Infinitive predicate*

- (i) DI-construction and related constructions
- (ii) Nominative-infinitive construction
- (iii) Other infinitive constructions

I will briefly discuss these constructions below.

4.4.4.1 The infinitive as a complement of a finite predicate

The infinitive can be a complement of a finite verb. In such cases the infinitive may be the object of the action denoted by the predicate. Such uses can be further subcategorized into objective and subjective infinitives. If the subject of the infinitive is identical to the subject of the finite verb one speaks of subjective use:

- (58) Xochu **rabotat'**.  
want-1SG work-INF-IMPERF  
'I want to work.'
- (59) On nachal **uchit'sja**.  
he started study-INF-IMPERF  
'He started to study.'

In such sentences the finite verb can be 'subjective modal' in nature, indicating the attitude of the subject to the potential action expressed by the infinitive (e.g. *xotet'* ('want'), *ljubit'* ('love'), *poprobovat'* ('try'), *reshat'* ('decide')), or phasal in nature, indicating some phase of the action (e.g. *nachat'* ('begin'), *prodolzhat'* ('continue')); I refer the reader to Bricyn (1990), for an overview of different lexical items that can form subjective infinitives.

If the agent of the infinitive is identical to the indirect object of the finite verb, one speaks of objective use. The finite verb in the case of the objective infinitive indicates an action of the subject that aims at the realization of the infinitive action by some other agent:

- (60) Ja velel emu **priexat'**.  
I ordered him come-INF-PERF  
'I ordered him to come.'

#### 4.4.4.2 The infinitive as goal specification of a finite predicate

In some cases the infinitive is interpreted as a specification to a finite verb with the function of expressing the purpose or goal of the action expressed by the finite verb, e.g.:

- (61) On poshel **otdyxat'**.  
he went rest-INF-IMPERF  
'He went to rest.'
- (62) Prishla s raboty, postavila **varit'** mjaso i prilegla.<sup>30</sup>  
came from work, put cook-INF-IMPERF meat and lay.down  
'She came back from work, put the meat on to cook, and lay down.'

In the first example the non-specified agent of the infinitive is associated with the subject of the finite verb, whereas in the second sentence the infinitive subject is associated with the object of the finite verb (*mjaso*).

#### 4.4.4.3 The infinitive occurring with adverbial or adjectival predicates

Infinitives can also occur as complement-specifications of adverbial predicates or specifications of adjectival predicates:

##### *Adverbial predicate*

- (63) Stydno **obmanyvat'**. (Zolotova, 1982: 252)  
ashaming-ADV deceive-INF-IMPERF  
'It is a shame to deceive.'
- (64) **Katat'sja** veselo. (Zolotova, 1982: 252)  
skate-INF fun-ADV  
'It's fun to skate.'

---

<sup>30</sup> [http:// lat.www.vladivostok.com/ Speaking\\_In\\_Tongues/ gaysarova.htm](http://lat.www.vladivostok.com/Speaking_In_Tongues/gaysarova.htm)

*Adjectival predicate*

- (65) Ja rad tebjja videt'.  
I-NOM happy you see-INF-PERF  
'I am happy to see you.'

The exact function of the infinitive in these sentences depends on the predicate with which it occurs: whether is adverbial or adjectival, or whether it is modal or non-modal. Wierzbicka (1966: 94) argues that in a sentence with an adverbial predicate, as in (63), the infinitive can be seen as the object of the state expressed by the adverb. Zolotova (1982: 268) gives a different description, and contends that one cannot speak of an object of some state, but that the infinitive expresses an action which causes the state that the subject is in. I think that the analysis given by Zolotova is more accurate. In my opinion sentences with an adverbial predicate express that *if* the subject realizes the infinitive action, he will experience the state expressed by the adverb. Therefore, sentences with an adverbial predicate, a dative and a past tense of *byt'* (e.g. *Mne bylo stydno obman'vat'*, 'I found it a shame to deceive him') do not *necessarily* express that the subject actually realized the action, although in a certain context such a reading is possible.<sup>31</sup> This contrasts with the construction in (65). In this sentence the infinitive can be seen as the object of the predicate, that is, it expresses the content of the state of being happy. This sentence does not have the conditional character typical of the adverbial construction, but rather can always be paraphrased with a *that*-clause (*Ja rad chto ja vizhu tebjja*, 'I am glad that I see you.').

A few words should be added here about the status of so-called 'independent' infinitives. These are infinitives that occupy the first position in the clause and, as such, function as the *topic* of the clause. Such sentences occur with adverbial predicates as in (64). This use of the infinitive is sometimes called 'independent nominal use of the infinitive' (Timofeev, 1950: 261). Traditionally, the infinitive is said to function like a subject ('podlezhashchee') in these sentences and it has a function similar to that of a noun. The analysis under discussion is not unproblematic, as Timofeev points out himself (1950: 262), remarking that the information structure of the clause may sometimes be the only factor that distinguishes an independent nominal infinitive from a dependent infinitive. This can be illustrated by means of the following two sentences,

---

<sup>31</sup> In (63) without dative such a reading is less clear; this sentence means that people who realize the infinitive situation should be ashamed.

which differ only in information structure, but have a different syntactic structure according to this view:

*Dative subject-Infinitive specification*

- (66) Emu bylo stydno **ubit'** cheloveka bezoruzhnogo. (Timofeev, 1950: 262/ Lermontov)  
 he-DAT was-IMPERS ashamed-ADV kill-INF-PERF man unarmed  
 'He was ashamed to kill an unarmed man.'

*Infinitive topic*

- (67) **Ubit'** cheloveka bezoruzhnogo emu bylo stydno. (ibid.)  
 kill-INF-PERF man unarmed he-DAT was-IMPERS ashamed-ADV  
 'To kill an unarmed man was a shame for him.'

On the basis of such evidence, both Wierzbicka (1966: 90) and Bricyn (1990: 104) reject the idea that the infinitive can be seen as a subject in the sentences above. The difficulty in this case is connected with the fact that the status of subjecthood (grammatical, logical, and psychological) is not clear. Although the different types of subject can be distinguished, they are also similar in important respects.

In my opinion it is best to distinguish the information structure from the semantic-syntactic structure in the case of sentences like these. This means that in both sentences the infinitive has the same syntactic and semantic function. In both cases the infinitive expresses the situation that induces the state expressed by the adverbial predicate of which the participant expressed in the dative is the recipient. In both cases the situation expressed by the infinitive can be identified with the situation expressed by the adverbial predicate. As such, the infinitive can be seen as identical to the non-identifiable subject of the verb *byt'*.

Can such a subject be compared to a nominative subject? It seems to me that there are differences and similarities. The infinitive topic is not identical to a nominal referent that is predicated by a finite predicate. In the case of a referent-predicate relation the predicate specifies some property of the thing. The inherent relation between the property and the thing is expressed in the case of finite verbs by means of agreement. In the case of adverbs as in (67), a predication is made about some non-specified situation, the identity of which is expressed by the infinitive. This means that the predicate indirectly predicates over the referent of the infinitive phrase. As the infinitive is a verb, the predication is made about a different kind of referent than in

the case of a nominative subject. The property of an action may be for example the influence that the situation has on the agent (*xolodno* ('cold'), *veselo* ('fun'), *trudno* ('difficult')). In the case of the construction under discussion, these properties are therefore associated with the dative participant, which has agent-like properties. Finally, whether one still wishes to speak of a subject or not, is ultimately a matter of choice.<sup>32</sup> In my analysis, however, I will treat the infinitive as the subject in this construction.

#### 4.4.4.4 The infinitive occurring with nouns

As I mentioned above, the infinitive also occurs as a specification to nouns or participles, as in the following examples:

- (68) Zhelajushchie **poexat'** na ekskursiju, dolzhny sobrat'sja rovno v devjat' casov.  
wish-PART go-INF to excursion, must gather precisely in nine hours  
'Those who wish to go on the excursion, must gather at nine sharp.'
- (69) Ja ne byl v sostojanii **rabotat'**.  
I not was in position work-INF  
'I wasn't in the position to work.'
- (70) Esli est' chto **dobavit'** – pishite.  
if is what add-INF – write  
'If you have something to add, write.'

In these sentences the infinitive specifies the referent of the noun by a restriction in terms of the situation type expressed by the infinitive. To give an example, the noun *sostojanie* refers to 'position' in general, but by placing the infinitive after it – *sostojanii rabotat'* – the speaker refers to a position *as far as* the realization of the situation type 'working' is concerned. The specificational function of the infinitive is connected with the referent of the noun being *directed* at the realization of the situation expressed by the infinitive, that is, the noun expresses a phenomenon that has particular characteristics that give rise to the realization of the infinitive situation. The specific nature of the relation between the referent of the noun and the infinitive situation differs from case to case.

In (68) the participle suggests a situation ('wishing') that is directed at the realization of the infinitive situation. In this case the infinitive expresses the content of the

---

<sup>32</sup> Not all adverbial predicates occur with infinitives, e.g. *mne teplo* ('I feel hot.'). A discussion of such cases fall beyond the scope of this analysis.

phenomenon expressed by the noun. In (69) the physical-psychological phenomenon expressed by the noun ('position') can be seen as something that enables the carrier of this phenomenon to realize the infinitive situation. In (70) the pronoun expresses a phenomenon ('something'), which is specified by the infinitive. This specification can be seen as the 'purpose' of the phenomenon, that is, the referent has particular characteristics such that one can realize the infinitive situation ('a piece of text that is suitable for adding to existing text').

#### 4.4.4.5 Infinitives as predicates

I will now briefly discuss constructions where the infinitive can be seen as the predicate of the sentence, the so-called 'infinitive sentences'. I will give three types of such constructions, viz. (i) the DI-construction or similar constructions, (ii) the nominative-infinitive construction, and (iii) constructions without subject in the dative or nominative. Furthermore, I would like to argue that in constructions with the subordinators *chtoby* ('in order'), *esli* ('if') and *prezhdë cheml pered tem kak/do togo kak* ('before'), the infinitive can also be seen as the predicate of a clause with a subordinate character; such cases can therefore be seen as special instances of the class of infinitive sentences. Examples are given below of the constructions under discussion:

##### *Sentences with subordinators (related to the DI-construction)*

- (71) Pered tem, kak **nagnut'sja**, ona posmotrela v nebo. (Aksenov, *Ozobog*)  
 before it how bend.down-INF-PERF, she looked at sky  
 'Before she bent down, she looked at the sky.'
- (72) Ja edu k morju, chtoby **otdoxnut'**. (Bricyn, 1990: 289)  
 I go to sea, in.order.to rest-INF-PERF  
 'I go to the sea to rest.'
- (73) Esli **tronut'** strasti v cheloveke, to, konečno, pravdy ne najdesj'. (Bricyn, 1990: 287/ Esenin)  
 if touch-IMF-PERF passion in man, then, of course, truth not you.will find.  
 'If you touch the passion in a man, then, of course, you won't find the truth.'

*Meaning and interpretation of the DI-construction*

*Nominative-Infinitive construction*

- (74) A oni – **xixikat'**. (V. Erofeev, 1993)  
but they – laugh-INF-IMPERF  
'But they started to laugh.'
- (75) Chut' svet, a ty uzh **poxmljajatsja**. (L. Leonov, *Barsuki*)<sup>33</sup>  
hardly light, and you already take.a.hair.of.the.dog.that.bit.you-INF-IMPERF  
'It's hardly light, and you already take a hair of the dog that bit you.'
- (76) Ja **revnovat'**? Vot ideja! (Ebeling, 1984: 120/ Gogol')  
I-NOM be.jealous-INF-IMPERF? what idea!  
'Me be jealous? What an idea!'

*Constructions without subject*

- (77) Sejchas v vannuju, bystro **est' i spat'**.<sup>34</sup> (From a list of things to do in a diary, Internet)  
now in bathroom, quickly eat-INF-IMPERF and sleep-INF-IMPERF  
'Now go into the bathroom, eat something quickly, and go to bed.'
- (78) Stranye ljudi, eti Kresse! **Skazat'** pri mal'chishke takuju veshch'! (*Russkaja Grammatika*, 1980, II: 376/ Bulgakov)  
strange people, those Cretians! Say-INF-PERF at boy such a thing  
'Strange people those Cretians! To say something like that in front of a boy.'
- (79) Mnogo **znat'** – malo **spat'**. (Veyrenc, 1979: 46)  
many know-INF-IMPERF – few sleep-INF-IMPERF  
'To know a lot, means to sleep little.'
- (80) **Exat'** tak **exat'**. (A. Velichko, 1996)  
go-INF-IMPERF then go-INF-IMPERF  
'If we have to go, then let's go.'

The interpretation of the infinitive as a predicate occurs in constructions where there is no agreement between an expressed or contextually given nominative and a finite verb, or

---

<sup>33</sup> <http://moshkow.orisk.ru/Library/lat/LEONOWL/barsuki.txt>

<sup>34</sup> [http://www.zhurnal.ru:8085/zavist/cinema/i\\_knew.htm](http://www.zhurnal.ru:8085/zavist/cinema/i_knew.htm)

in constructions where the finite verb is the impersonal use of the verb *byt'* ('be').<sup>35</sup> As I argued above, the interpretation of the infinitive as a predicate may be the result of the meaning of the construction itself, or of the linguistic/ pragmatic context in which the construction occurs. As such, the 'independent' semantic and syntactic status of the construction differs from one construction to another.

In constructions where the infinitive can be seen as the predicate of the sentence, the so-called predicative meaning of the infinitive can be paraphrased with 'is the case', or 'applies to some agent'. This semantic overlay can be seen as the expression of predicativeness in its most basic form, and presupposes that there exists some referent about which the situation is predicated. Note that in my analysis I make a distinction between the constituent of the sentence that can be analyzed as the *predicate* of the construction, and the *predicative center* of the construction, that is, the head constituent that expresses the 'verbal' properties of the construction. In my analysis I will argue that it is incorrect to assign the category of predicativity to non-finite verbs. As I will argue below in 4.5 and 4.6, the predicative center of the DI-construction and the nominative-infinitive construction is an *interpretative* phenomenon that is not formally expressed, but is rather implied by the combination of the infinitive and some expressed or implied agent that is associated with the infinitive (dative, nominative). The specific way of associating the infinitive with an agent differs from one construction to another, and is connected with the meaning of the different constituents in the construction.

Below I will briefly discuss these different constructions, and say why I think the infinitive can be seen as the predicate of the construction.

In the case of the DI-construction, the non-expressed infinitive agent is associated with the dative participant. The association of the non-expressed infinitive agent with the dative subject leads to a modal interpretation (necessity, wish, possibility, direction, etc.). As I will argue below, this modal nature of the DI-construction results from the fact that the speaker states that a situation will be the case regardless of the question of whether the potential agent initiates the situation; this means that the infinitive situation is assigned to the dative participant. In the DI-construction the predicative center is implied by the association of the infinitive with a dative participant; the infinitive can be seen as the predicate of the sentence in the sense that it expresses the situation type that is assigned to the dative participant. The DI-construction will be discussed extensively below.

---

<sup>35</sup> As I will discuss below, in some constructions the third person use of the verb *znachit'* ('mean') can be expressed.

In the case of sentences with the subordinators *chtoby* ('in order'), *esli* ('if') and *prezhde chem*, or *pered tem*, *kak* and *do togo kak* ('before') no dative subject occurs, although, as I will discuss below in 4.11, the dative may be expressed under particular circumstances; such cases can be seen as instances of the DI-construction. In the literature the construction under discussion (with or without dative) is usually not treated as an instance of the class of infinitive sentences (see Bricyn (1990: 282–304) for a discussion). Bricyn (1990: 285) argues that the construction under discussion often shows formal correspondences with infinitive sentences, but differs from the infinitive sentences because they lack the specific modal meaning typical of infinitive sentences. In my opinion, this statement is not entirely correct for two reasons, namely (i) sentences with subordinators and a dative do have a modal character, and (ii) the predicate status of the infinitive is not constituted by the 'modal' meaning of the construction.

The question of whether the construction without a dative can be seen as an infinitive sentence or not is, in my opinion, a question that cannot be answered with a simple yes or no because the so-called 'category' of predicativity is not a clear-cut semantic phenomenon, but an *interpretational* phenomenon. Consider the following sentence, where the goal of the action is not introduced by *chtoby*:

- (81) Podumala poexat' v meriju, tam najti pravdu, a mne posovetovali ne trepat' sebe nervy.  
(Internet, Newspaper).  
thought go-INF-PERF in city hall, there find-INF-PERF truth (...)  
'I thought about going to the city hall, to find the truth there, but they advised me not to go into all that trouble.'

Must the infinitive be seen as a predicate or not? Both syntactically and semantically, the infinitive constituent has, at least to some extent, an independent status. The syntactically independent status is underlined by the intonation break, indicated by the commas.<sup>36</sup> It can be argued that the infinitive forms a semantically independent unit because it is not a necessary complement to *podumala poexat' v meriju*, but gives additional information about the goal of the action; since the infinitive is always associated with an agent, the infinitive constituent can be seen as a clause with a subordinate character. Nevertheless, the infinitive constituent also has a dependent status, since it semantically depends on the information expressed in the first clause; the infinitive is only possible when it indicates a programmed, consciously chosen situation (see Murav'eva, 1984, for a discussion). The syntactic dependence of the infinitive is underlined by the fact that the infinitive

---

<sup>36</sup> Note that one could insert *i* ('and') here, which points at the co-ordinate character of the construction.

constituent necessarily occurs in a second position (\**Tam najti pravdu, podumala poexcat' v meriju*). In the case of sentences with *chtoby* the independent character is even stronger. I agree with Ebeling (1984: 105), who remarks that *chtoby* connects two separate situations, whereas sentences without *chtoby* present one complex identity, consisting of two parts. Semantically, this is underlined by the fact that the infinitive need not refer to a consciously chosen situation, and syntactically, because such infinitive clauses can also occur as the first clause in the sentence; this is made possible by the fact that the indication of goal is expressed by a form, and not inferred from the context.

A different construction is exemplified by the nominative-infinitive construction in (74)–(76). In the nominative construction a participant is identified by the nominative pronoun, and the situation of this subject is expressed by the infinitive. Such sentences always have SV order, occur only as main-clauses, and often have an intonational pause between the subject and the infinitive (indicated in written language with ‘-’). In some cases (those that have an ingressive interpretation) the particle *nu* can be placed before the infinitive. Depending on the context, these infinitives receive a so-called ingressive interpretation (indicating the beginning of an action) or an intensive interpretation (indicating that the infinitive action contrasts with another expected action). I think these specific interpretations are the result of the interaction between the general infinitive meaning of situation type, as discussed earlier, and the context in which the infinitive occurs. The subject in the nominative combined with a situation type presupposes a contrast with another, expected action. In all cases it is expressed that the infinitive situation applies to the agent, and not a situation of another type. Bulygina & Shmelev (1997: 105) argue that this construction only occurs with controlled situations, which they underline by the impossibility of using lexemes like *scudet'* (‘become slim’) or non-animate subjects in the construction.<sup>37</sup> The construction can only be used in the case of identifiable subjects, in cases where the realization of the situation can be perceived at the moment of speaking. Note that the occurrence of the nominative in this construction, instead of the dative, means that the realization of the infinitive situation is not conceptualized as the result of a force; this construction therefore differs semantically from the DI-construction.

In many constructions where the infinitive can be seen as the predicate of the sentence it is not possible to express a subject (nominative, dative) at all, or the expression of a dative subject would alter the meaning of the construction. This is the case for example in (80). The construction [infinitive + infinitive] can be used to express

---

<sup>37</sup> This restriction only accounts for the ingressive interpretation; in the case of the intensive interpretation the situation may be uncontrolled (*Ja – revnovat'?* *Vot idejat!*; Ebeling (1984))

consent with the realization of the infinitive situation. This construction could be paraphrased in English with ‘if it is the case that the infinitive situation is appropriate, then the infinitive situation is appropriate’; this reading suggests that the speaker agrees with the realization of the infinitive. In this construction the dative may be inserted, e.g.:

- (82) A mne uzh exat’ tak exat’. (A. Velichko, 1996: 20)  
but -DAT PRT go-INF-IMPERF then go-INF-IMPERF  
‘Well if I have to go, I’ll go’/ ‘I have to go, so I’ll go.’

Cases with a dative express the idea of necessity more clearly than cases without a dative; by expressing the dative, this construction can be seen as an instance of the DI-construction.

In other cases it is not possible to insert a dative. This is the case for example in (77), where the infinitive is used in a list of actions that are going to be performed; in (78), where the speaker expresses his negative attitude to the past realization of the situation type by the contextually given agents, and in (79), where two infinitive clauses are conjoined to form a complex sentence with a conditional interpretation.

The impossibility of expressing a dative in these cases must be motivated by the absence of the idea of a force that is directed at the realization of the infinitive situation. In the case of a list of actions, the speaker merely focuses on the identity of the things that he is going to do. In the case of (78) the infinitive situation is not conceptualized as the result of a force, but rather the speaker focuses on the type of situation, as such abstracting from the individual occurrence of the situation. As I mentioned before, this use of the infinitive is typical of contexts where a judgement is uttered about the type of action (cf. Ebeling, 1984). Note that in contrast to the DI-construction, in both constructions the predicativity of the infinitive is dependent on the linguistic or pragmatic context in which the construction occurs.

For the impossibility of expressing a dative in conditional constructions like (79), the motivation must be sought in the ‘general character’ of the construction. This construction expresses that there is a relation of coherence between the realizations of the two situation types. This identity may be interpreted differently, depending on the context in which the construction occurs. The *Russkaja Grammatika* (1980, II: 312–314) distinguishes five main types, viz. (a) identity, (b) equivalence, (c) existence, (d) implication and (e) comparison. In most cases it is not possible to change the order of the constituents, because this would lead to a change in meaning, more specifically the relation of implication would be reversed. I think that the absence of the dative in this construction must be motivated by the semantics of the construction and the

incompatibility of the meaning of the construction with the meaning of the dative noun. In my opinion, the fact that no dative noun can be expressed in this construction is connected with the general, law-like character of such expressions. This general character presupposes the idea of a non-specific agent, which means that the infinitive subject must remain unspecified.<sup>38</sup>

The impersonal conditional infinitive construction as in (79) has given rise to much discussion in the literature, especially because it is not clear whether the infinitives in these sentences are predicates, nor whether such sentences have a subject-predicate structure. To give more insight into the status of predicative infinitives, I will briefly discuss them here.

In the *Russkaja Grammatika* (1980, II: 312) sentences like these are treated as sentences with a subject-copula-predicate structure. In my terminology this means that the status of predicative center is assigned to the non-expressed or expressed finite verb, and the status of predicate is assigned to the second infinitive. Peshkovskij (1956: 279) gives a different analysis, and speaks about a complex of two infinitive sentences. This means that a predicative status is assigned to each of the infinitives. He does, however, make an exception for cases where a copula or a finite verb like *znachit* ('means') is expressed:

- (83) **Nazvat'** ego v glaza obmannikom – bylo **podvergnut'** sebja pogibeli.  
(Pushkin/ Peshkovskij, 1956: 279)  
call-INF him in eyes deceiver, – was-NEUT expose-INF self to.death  
'To call him a deceiver in his presence, was like exposing yourself to death.'
- (84) ... **Revnovat'** znachit **unizhat'** i sebja i ee .... (L. Tolstoj/ Peshkovskij, 1956: 279)  
be.jealous-INF means humiliate-INF and self and her  
'To be jealous means to humiliate both yourself and her.'

Peshkovskij (1956: 279) contends that in these sentences one can speak of subject, copula, and predicate, although he claims that the question of which infinitive must be seen as subject or predicate cannot be answered. An altogether different opinion is expressed by Bricyn (1990: 177), who thinks that in this construction the infinitives have a purely nominal function, and cannot be seen as either subject or predicate. Bricyn (1990:

---

<sup>38</sup> Ebeling (1984: 117) argues that the absence of a subject must be interpreted in the same way as the absence of the infinitive subject in subjective infinitives, but I am not sure how this remark should be interpreted. I would like to point out that in the case of the conditional construction and in the case of the construction where the infinitive has the character of a complement, the forms *odin* and *sam* occur in the dative case. For a further discussion, see 4.17

178) therefore speaks about a ‘three componental subjectless predicateness schema (Inf-Inf)-Vf<sub>byt</sub>’

The differences in opinion presented here not only indicate the difficulty of this linguistic phenomenon, but also point to the problematic status of terms like ‘subject’, ‘predicate’, and ‘predicative’. The subject-predicate structure of language must principally be seen as a logico-pragmatic feature, rather than as a structural feature. In order for a linguistic expression to be informative, something must be said about something. In language this logical-pragmatic subject-predicate structure can be called ‘predicativity’. Predicativity is the feature of *linguistic forms in their context* such that they can be interpreted as predicates. Finite verbs are inherently predicative because they always evoke the idea of an agent.<sup>39</sup> In such cases what is expressed is that some entity was the agent of some action. Other parts of speech may need more contextual information to be predicative. Consider for example the following sentences where an adjective and a noun are predicative:

- a. Tasty!  
= That is tasty.
- b. Tea?  
= Do you want tea?

Infinitives are always associated with agents (if the verb is personal); this means that infinitives are potentially predicative. In relation to finite verbs, however, the level of predicativity is ‘lowered’ because the relation between a specific subject and an action is abstracted. In its context, however, the infinitive may be related to a specific agent, which may induce a predicative interpretation if no other predicate is available. In the construction under discussion the infinitives have a predicative interpretation, but this interpretation only occurs when the clauses are related to each other, to form a compound predicate. In terms of lambda abstraction:  $\lambda xP(x) = \lambda Q(x)$  is interpreted as  $(\lambda x(P(x) = Q(x)))$ . In this analysis the predicative interpretation of both of the infinitives is the result of the context, which is partly constituted by the infinitives themselves.

A problematic aspect of this analysis is that the predicative nature of the infinitives is not very clear in most cases, especially in those cases where the agent of the infinitive cannot be identified with some specific agent given in the context. In the conditional construction under discussion the predicative character of the infinitives can only be

---

<sup>39</sup> In the case of impersonal verbs, the ‘agent’ has a more abstract nature.

made clear with a paraphrase such as 'If you do X, you will also do Y'.<sup>40</sup> A further problematic aspect of the treating of the infinitives as predicative is that they do not essentially differ in function from infinitives that occur as a complement to an adverbial predicate, e.g.: *Nazvat' ego v glazu obmannikom – bylo opasno* ('Calling him a deceiver in front of his eyes was dangerous').

Because of the problematic status of predicativity of infinitives in the conditional construction under discussion it might be better to follow Bricyn (1990: 177), who treats the infinitives in this construction as pure nominals. I do not think, however, that this is entirely right. Infinitives cannot be seen as *purely* nominal, because they are always associated with some agent, either generic or given in the context. As such, they differ from nominals expressed by nouns. It is precisely the borderline status of infinitives that gives rise to the problems in the classification of such sentences. In my opinion, the occurrence of sentences like these shows that the division of infinitives into complements and predicates is not absolute, and is to some extent artificial. As such, infinitives are never real complements, nor real predicates.

In this section I have discussed the meaning of the infinitive, and the different syntactic functions of the infinitive. In the following section I will discuss the meaning and function of the verb *byt'*.

#### 4.5 The verb *byt'* ('be')

In this section I will give a description of the verb *byt'* ('be') as it occurs in the DI-construction, and as it occurs in other constructions. The verb *byt'* in the DI-construction shows clitic-like behavior. As such, it can be compared to the use of *byt'* as it occurs with some modal adverbial predicates (*mozžno, nado*) and modal adjectival predicates (*dolzhen*). I will argue that the clitic-like status of *byt'* in the DI-construction is connected with the *modal* nature of the construction. I will propose that the function of *byt'* ('be') in the DI-construction is that of an auxiliary of time. This means that *byt'* cannot be seen as the *predicative center* of the DI-construction, i.e. it does not express the main verbal properties of the sentence. The predicative center of the construction is not formally expressed, but results from the unification of the non-expressed infinitive agent with the agent in the dative or some non-expressed agent, leading to the modal nature of the construction.

---

<sup>40</sup> Note that in some cases nouns can be used in the same context, e.g. in the Dutch sentence *Macht is kracht* ('Power is strength'). Such sentences share properties with the infinitive sentences under discussion.

I will first briefly look at the way in which this word functions in the DI-construction. I will start by touching on the impersonal character of the verb *byt'*, and then consider the auxiliary status of *byt'*.

#### **4.5.1 Impersonal use**

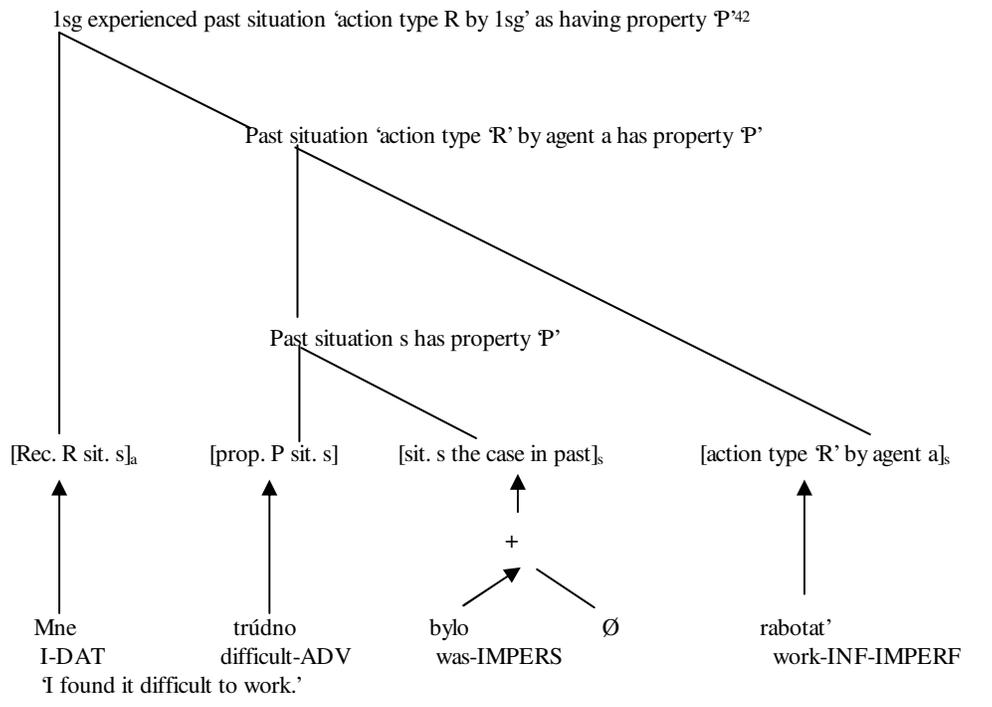
In the DI-construction the verb *byt'* occurs in the neuter declension. This specific use can be seen as so-called 'impersonal' use. One can speak of *personal* use of *byt'* if there is grammatical agreement between a nominative subject and *byt'*, for example in the expression *ja byla/ vy byli* (I-NOM was-AGR/ you-NOM were-AGR). One speaks of *impersonal* use if there is no nominative subject available, and the verb *byt'* occurs in the neuter declension. The impersonal use of *byt'* occurs in constructions where there is no finite verb other than *byt'*, and where the subject, if expressed or expressible, is a dative subject. These are constructions with an adverbial predicate, constructions where the infinitive is the predicate, or the existential construction, where the adverb/ pronoun + infinitive is the predicate.

It may be argued that the neuter declension of *byt'* in the case of the impersonal use points to the fact that one has to speak of a non-expressed subject comparable to the English 'it' in this construction. This opinion is discussed by Birjulin (1993), and more explicitly put forward by Smith (1994), who defines the non-expressed subject of impersonal use of verbs as 'the setting'. In my opinion one should be careful ascribing meaning to a constituent which is not formally expressed and expressible. I therefore prefer to speak of a non-specified subject in these cases, rather than of a non-expressed specific subject. To give some insight into the semantic-syntactic function of *bylo*, I will give a simplified syntactic representation of an instance of an adverbial construction with impersonal use of *byt'* in Figure 4.5.

In the sentence in Figure 4.5 the impersonal verb *bylo* expresses that some unspecified situation was the case; this unspecified situation is then further associated with the situation expressed by the infinitive. As such, the subject of *bylo* can be indirectly identified with the infinitive. The identification of the non-specified situation with a specific expressed situation occur in all cases. Take for example the following sentence: *Bylo zhariko* (was-IMPERS hot-ADV; 'It was hot'). In this sentence the verb

*bylo* expresses that there was a situation where non-specified people experienced hotness.<sup>41</sup>

Figure 4.5



#### 4.5.2 The auxiliary status of *byt'*

In the DI-construction, *byt'* can occur in the past and future tense; the absence of the verb *byt'* in the present tense can in principle be seen as a zero form of *byt'*, since the

<sup>41</sup> Of course one can say that in this case the subject of the sentence is 'the setting', but I am not sure whether such an analysis attributes much to the understanding of the construction. Furthermore, the gender of the verb *bylo* can also be motivated in terms of the most *optimal* choice from the gender system.

<sup>42</sup> A more adequate way of saying could be 'there was a situation in the past where I experienced the difficulty of my working'.

absence of *byt'* stands in opposition to presence of *byt'* in the the future and past tense.<sup>43</sup> Another way of analyzing the absence of *byt'* in the present tense is to say that the predicative idea of 'something being the case' is an interpretative phenomenon that is induced by relating the constituents in the construction to each other. This means that the idea of *byt'* is *implied* by the context, rather than *expressed* by a zero form in the construction. It must be remarked here that *byt'* occurs more frequently in the past tense than in the future tense (see Maurice, 1996), and that there is a tendency for *byt'* to occur with specific verbs only (see the analysis of the different uses below). As such, the absence of *byt'* in the present tense of the DI-construction does not always imply an opposition with a past or future tense. This means that the status of *byt'* in the case of the DI-construction differs from the status of *byt'* in other constructions with a 'zero form' of *byt'* (cf. the nominative-copula-noun construction in (91) below, where there is no restriction on expressing *byt'* in the past of future tense).

There are further restrictions on the verb *byt'* in the DI-construction. The verb *byt'* cannot be accented, and cannot be negated; the negative particle *ne* has to be placed before the infinitive; a sentence like the following is ungrammatical:

- (85) \*Emu ne bylo ponjat'.  
He-DAT not was-IMPERS understand-INF

*Byt'* can occur as a clitic to the infinitive (*bylo* INF) or as a non-clitic (INF *bylo*); the infinitive and *byt'* always seem to form a constituent (Veyrenc, 1979). The dative can occur before the infinitive-*byt'* constituent or after it:

- (86) ?Bylo emu ne ponjat'. (*byt'* and the infinitive do not form a constituent)  
was-IMPERS he-DAT not understand-INF
- (87) ?Rabotat' vchera mne bylo. (ibid.)  
work-INF yesterday I-DAT was-IMPERS
- (88) Emu bylo ne ponjat'.  
he-DAT was-IMPERS not understand-INF  
'He couldn't understand'

---

<sup>43</sup> Another way of analyzing the absence of *byt'* in the present tense is to say that the predicative idea of 'something being the case' is an interpretative phenomenon that is induced by relating the constituents in the construction to each other. This means that the idea of *byt'* is *implied* by the context, rather than *expressed* by a zero form in the construction.

The syntactic behavior of *byt'* (no accent, impossibility of negation) shows clitic-like properties. As I will argue below, the clitic-like status of *byt'* is connected with the modal nature of the construction.<sup>44</sup> To gain insight into the meaning and use of *byt'* in the DI-construction we have to look at the function and use of *byt'* in other constructions as well.

The semantic-syntactic function and use of the verb *byt'* differs from one construction to another. Veyrenc (1983: 212) gives an overview of the different uses of *byt'*. He speaks about a 'scale of *byt'*' where seven types can be distinguished. Below in Table 4.1, I give an overview of the different functions distinguished by Veyrenc:

Table 4.1. The seven degrees of *byt'* ('be') (Veyrenc, 1983: 212)\*

| Forms of past <i>byl-</i>                                      | Forms of present and negation |                        |
|--|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| (Hyperemphatic)  | <i>est'~sut'</i>              | <i>ne est'~ne sut'</i> |
| 7 Emphatic with support<br>(Absolute-existential construction) | <i>est'</i>                   | (???)                  |
| 6 Emphatic<br>(Locative construction)                          | <i>est'</i>                   | <i>net</i>             |
| 5 Emphatic ~ accented<br>(Possessive construction)             | <i>est'~∅</i>                 | <i>net</i>             |
| 4 Accented<br>(Copular use)                                    | ∅                             | <i>ne</i>              |
| 3 Accented ~ clitic<br>(Non-modal adverbs)                     | ∅                             | <i>ne ~ ...</i>        |
| 2 Clitic<br>(Modal adverbs)                                    | ∅                             | <i>ne ...</i>          |
| 1 Suppresible clitic<br>(DI-construction)                      | (∅)                           | <i>ne...</i>           |

\* '*ne...*' means that the negation cannot be followed immediately by *bylo*; '*x~y*' means that both x and y occur.

<sup>44</sup> Vinogradov & Shvedova (1964: 341) note on the use of the infinitive sentence in the nineteenth century that in the spoken language the accent may be on the copula in the case of the particle *by*: *byló by* + INF.

Veyrenc bases his classification on (i) the accentability or emphasisability of *byt'*, (ii) the possibility or necessity of expression in the present tense, (iii) the negatability, and (iv) the type of negation (*ne* or *net*). This syntactic classification, based on parameters of information structure, mirrors semantic differences between the different functions of the verb *byt'*. Roughly speaking, three uses can be distinguished, viz. (i) uses that express *existence* (types 5–7), (ii) so-called *copular use* (type 4), and (iii) uses that must be seen as *auxiliaries* (types 1–3). Veyrenc classifies the DI-construction as a case of type 1, which means that the verb *byt'* in the DI-construction must be seen as a suppressible clitic with the status of an auxiliary.<sup>45</sup> Below I will briefly discuss the different functions of *byt'* mentioned here.

In the case of the so-called *existential* use of *byt'*, the form *byt'* expresses the existence or presence of an entity. This is the case for example in the locative construction given below:

- (89) V ètoj biblioteke est' interesnye knigi.  
in this library is interesting books  
'There are interesting books in this library.'

A formal difference between existential use and non-existential use is that in the case of existential use *byt'* can be expressed in the present tense; note that there is only a third person singular form of *byt'* in the present, viz. *est'*. As I will argue below, in such sentences *byt'* is both the predicative center (main verbal element) and the predicate of the sentence.

In the case of so-called *copular* use the verb *byt'* (expressed in the past or future tense, and 'implied' in the present tense) can be seen as the predicative center, expressing the verbal properties of the sentence, but not as the predicate of the sentence. A copula is used to point at the relation of some property, expressed by the predicate, and an entity, which is interpreted as the carrier of the property expressed by the predicate (cf. Ebeling, 1978: 231). For the copular meaning of Russian *byt'* one can offer the description given by Langacker (1991a: 65) for English *be*, viz. "*be* profiles a continuation through time of a stable situation characterized only as a stative relation". In Russian, copular use occurs with adjectives or nouns:

- (90) On byl molodoj.  
he-NOM was-SG-M young-SG-M

---

<sup>45</sup> The classification given by Veyrenc does not account for the existential construction.

'He was young.'

- (91) On učitel'.  
 he teacher  
 'He is a teacher.'

In such sentences a predication is made about the subject of the sentence; the subject is said to have the property expressed by the predicate (in the case of adjectives), or the subject is said to have the identity expressed by the noun. In the present tense the verb *byť* is not expressed in the case of copular use. In such cases the predicativity is inferred from the combination of the adjective or noun, and the subject (or expressed by a zero form), or put differently, expressed by a zero form. The verb *byť* is only expressed in the past tense or the future tense; in such cases the expression of the copula is necessary to express tense. In contrast to the clitic-like use of the verb *byť* in the DI-construction and in the case of modal adverbs, the copula can be negated. In the case of negation it is expressed that the subject does not have the property expressed by the predicate.

The verb *byť* also occurs with adverbial predicates, as in (28) above. In the case of predicates, as in (28), one cannot speak of copular use in the strict sense because there is no relation between the nominative subject and a finite verb. Veyrenc (1983: 212) therefore uses the term 'auxiliary' for such cases. Note that the status of *byť* (auxiliary/ copula) also depends on the information structure of the clause. In constructions with non-modal adverbs *byť* can occur in a pre-adverbial position, or as a clitic of the adverb:

- (92) Oni vyšli na ulicu. Bylo žárko. (Veyrenc, 1983: 213)  
 they went on the street. was-NEUT hot  
 'They went out on the street. It was hot outside.'
- (93) Oni vyšli na ulicu. Zhárko bylo. (ibid.)  
 they went on the street. hot was-NEUT  
 'They went out on the street: it was hot outside.'

The difference in position and intonation is related to a difference in meaning (cf. Veyrenc, 1983: 213). As I will argue below, this difference in meaning can be related to the difference in information structure.

*Meaning and interpretation of the DI-construction*

The term ‘auxiliary’ is used quite broadly by Veyrenc to refer to those cases that he classifies as non-existential and non-copular (types 1–3). Besides the use with an adverbial predicate, which I discussed under copular use, he classifies as auxiliary use cases with the modal predicates *dólzhen*, *nado*, *mozǎno* and *nel’zja* (type 2) and the modal infinitive construction (type 1). What these cases have in common is that the verb *byt’* occurs as a clitic and cannot be negated. The clitic-like status of the verb *byt’* in the case of modal predicates occurs both with nominative subjects, where there is agreement between the subject and *byt’*, and with dative subjects, where we find the neuter form:

*Agreeing modals*

- (94) On **ne** dólzhen byl ostavat’sja.  
he-NOM not must-AGR be-PAST-AGR stay-INF-IMPERF  
‘He didn’t have to stay.’
- (95) On dólzhen byl **ne** ostavat’sja.  
he-NOM must-AGR be-PAST-AGR NEG stay-INF-IMPERF  
‘He had to not stay.’
- (96) \*On dólzhen **ne** byl ostavat’sja.  
He-NOM must-AGR NEG be-PAST-AGR stay-INF-IMPERF

*Non-agreeing modals*

- (97) Emu **ne** nádo bylo ostavat’sja.  
he-DAT NEG need be-PAST-NEUT stay-INF-IMPERF  
‘He shouldn’t have stayed.’
- (98) Emu nado bylo **ne** ostavat’sja.  
he-DAT need be-PAST-NEUT NEG stay-INF-IMPERF  
‘He should have not stayed.’
- (99) \*Emu nado **ne** bylo ostavat’sja  
he-DAT need NEG be-PAST-NEUT stay-INF-IMPERF

This use of the verb *byt’* can be contrasted with the use of the verb *byt’* with normal adverbial predicates, where *byt’* occurs before the adverb, and where *byt’* or the adverb can be negated:

- (100) Mne ne bylo grustno.  
I-DAT not was-IMPERS sad-ADV  
'I wasn't sad.'
- (101) Mne bylo ne grustno.  
I-DAT was-IMPERS not sad-ADV  
'I wasn't sad.'

In these sentences the adverb can be seen as a modifier of the state expressed by *byt'*. As such, negating the adverb and negating the copula amount to negating the same state of affairs. This is not possible in the case of modal adverbs; the use of *byt'* with modal adverbs/ adjectives can be compared to the use of *byt'* in the DI-construction, where the verb *byt'* cannot be accented or negated.

The relevant information I have presented so far can be summarized as follows. The verb *byt'* in the DI-construction shows clitic-like behaviour. In this respect it differs from the use of *byt'* in the case of the existential constructions, and in the case of normal adverbial predicates. It does share, however, this property with some modal predicates. Considering this, it may be that the clitic-like status of *byt'* is related in some way to the *modal* meaning of both constructions.

Before going into the relation between modality and the auxiliary status of *byt'*, I want to argue that there exists the following general relation between the degree of *byt'* and its predicativity:

The higher the degree of *byt'* as defined by Veyrenc (i.e. the lower its clitic-like status), the higher its predicativity; the lower the degree of *byt'* (i.e. the higher its clitic-like status), the lower its predicativity.

This is a very general statement, as both the phenomenon of 'clitic-like behavior' and the phenomenon of 'predicativity' are very fuzzy; and difficult to define and measure. Nevertheless, the statement conveys the observation that in those cases where *byt'* shows clitic-like behavior, it cannot be seen as the predicative center. This phenomenon can be pragmatically motivated by the following rule:

If some information 'x' is expressed by form  $x$ , then the same information will not be expressed by form  $y$  in the same sentence.

This means that in those cases where *byt'* occurs as a clitic, it is not the predicative center, because the predicativity is expressed by some other form, or combination of forms, and in those cases where it occurs as a non-clitic, the predicativity is expressed by *byt'* itself.

I would like to suggest that the fact that *byt'* can only occur after the predicate in the case of the modal predicates is connected with the *predicative* status of these modal forms. My assertion is that modals that necessarily occur before impersonal *byt'* function as predicative elements, viz. the elements expressing the *verbal* properties of the sentence.<sup>46</sup> In such sentences the modal forms can be seen as the *predicative center* of the sentence, and the verb *byt'* as an *auxiliary of time*. The auxiliary only expresses the time of the situation expressed by the predicate. It cannot be negated because that would 'clash' with the meaning already expressed by the modal form. The modal form expresses that some situation is the case in reality, while *byt'* expresses that the action that is the case is related to a particular time. Negating *byt'* would amount to saying that 'something which is the case is not the case'.

In the case of adverbs that can occur after the copula as in (100)–(101), the predicate is the adverb, but the predicative center (the form expressing the verbal properties) is the copula: it expresses that there is a stable relation between the subject and the property expressed by the adverb. It is possible to negate the copula, because this amounts to saying that there is no such relation.

It has to be explained (a) *why* the modals *mozžno*, *nado*, *dolzhen* can function as 'verbal' predicates, and (b) how the information structure of the sentence is related to the predicative status of these modals. To start with the first question: why can modal adverbs/ adjectives function as predicative elements? In order to answer this, it must be shown that the modal meaning of these predicates is compatible with the idea of *agenthood*, *realization*, and *embedding in time*. I think this is indeed the case. I wish to argue that the idea of being compelled to do an action can be conceived as a situation in which there is a moment where the subject is not compelled, and a moment where the subject is compelled by a particular force to *do* an action. The same, I think, accounts for cases of possibility; here there is no compelling force, but rather an enabling 'force' that enables the subject to do an action. In both cases, we perceive an entity as expending energy to do an action such that a state of affairs can be perceived through

---

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Schoorlemmer (1994), who argues that modal adverbs must be seen as verbs. In her analysis, however, the verbal status of the modals is only analyzed in terms of syntactic properties, and is not semantically motivated.

time. Note that an expression of modality does not imply *per se* that we perceive the action in time, only that it is *compatible* with the idea of embedding in time.

The predicative nature of the modal can be illustrated with an example. In the following sentences the short adjective *dolžhen* occurs, in (a) as an adjective proper and in (b) as a modal form:

- (102) On byl dólzhen mne dva dólłara.  
 he-NOM was-AGR obliged-ADJ I-DAT two dollar  
 'He owed me two dollars.' (lit. He was under obligation me two dollars)
- (103) On dólzhen byl ostavát'sja.  
 he-NOM obliged-ADJ was-AGR stay-INF  
 'He had to stay.'

In (102) *dolžhen* expresses a property of the subject. The expression of the property (*dolžhen*) is not related to time; the predicative center of the sentence is the copula. Here we can negate *byt'* because this amounts to saying that the property expressed by the adjective is not part of the subject. In (103) it is expressed that the subject is under the influence of a particular force that compels him to do something. Here *byt'* cannot be negated because the verbal use of the adjective, which expresses the idea of 'something being the case in reality', is not in accordance with the negation of *byt'*. The function of *byt'* in this sentence is to express that the situation that is the case, is related to the past.

It must be remarked that the proposed predicative status of the modal adverbs/ adjectives under discussion only occurs in cases where (i) the subject of the predicate is expressed in the dative or nominative case or (ii) the subject of the adverb is not expressed but is interpreted as a non-specified subject. An example of a non-specified subject can be found in the case of the modal adverb *mozžno*; *mozžno* cannot be combined with a dative in most contexts, but still shows Adverb *byt'* order. In the case of impersonal sentences, however, the verb *byt'* can be negated, if it occurs before the adverb:

- (104) a. ne bylo nádo.  
 not was must-ADV
- b. ne nádo bylo.  
 not must-ADV was
- c. \*nádo ne bylo.

*Meaning and interpretation of the DI-construction*

must-ADV not was

- d. bylo ne nádo.  
was not must-ADV  
'It wasn't necessary.'

The same accounts for sentences with universal negation in the dative and negative concord, where the dative does not refer to a specific person, but to the universal negative quantifier:

- (105) a. Nikomu ne bylo nádo.  
nobody-DAT not was-IMPERS necessary-ADV
- b. Nikomu ne nádo bylo.  
nobody-DAT not necessary-ADV was
- c. ?Nikomu nado né bylo.<sup>47</sup>  
Nobody-DAT (that) necessary-ADV not was
- d. Nikomu bylo ne nádo.  
Nobody-DAT was not necessary-DAT  
'Nobody had to/ It wasn't necessary for anyone.'

The relation between impersonal sentences and sentences with a universal negative quantifier can be motivated as follows. The negative universal quantifier does not refer to an entity, viz. a person or thing with the name 'nobody'. Because of this, no properties can be attributed to it. The non-entity status of the universal quantifier accounts for some of the observed semantic behavior of this form, e.g. for its so-called anti-additive behavior. The property of additivity can be defined as follows (cf. Van der Wouden, 1994: 30):

**Definition** Let  $B$  and  $B^*$  be two Boolean algebras.

A function  $f$  from  $B$  to  $B^*$  is *additive* iff for arbitrary arguments  $X, Y, \in B$ :

$$f(X \cup Y) = f(X) \cup f(Y)$$

---

<sup>47</sup> Insertion of *èto* ('it') makes the sentence grammatical: *Nikomu nado èto né bylo* (lit. 'For nobody necessary it was not'). The prosodic structure of the sentence plays an important part in phenomena like these.

Because the negative universal quantifier is anti-additive, the following sentences cannot be seen as identical:

Nobody drinks or smokes  $\neq$  Nobody drinks or nobody smokes

In the case of *nobody* it is not expressed that there is some subject of some action, but rather that for some action there is no subject. As such, the syntactic behaviour of *nobody* is not that of a subject. The difference between normal subjects and *nobody* has a semantic origin, and leads to the syntactic processing of *drinks or smokes* as one unit to which no subject is assigned. As such, sentences with a negative universal quantifier can also be compared to impersonal sentences as well.

Now we can go back to our initial problem, viz. why is it that in impersonal sentences the status of *nado* is not that of the predicative center, but must be compared that of adverbs like *grustno* in (101). To motivate this, then, it is necessary to explain why we cannot embed the situation in time, as in the case of personal sentences (*mne nado bylo*). The reason for this, I think, can be found in the fact that we do not have the idea of a situation in which there is a moment where a specific subject is not compelled, and a moment where the subject is the recipient of some state of being compelled, assigned by a particular force. In the case of impersonal sentences we perceive the necessity as a stative state of affairs, rather than as a repetitive event where a force compels the subject to do an action. As such impersonal cases where *byt'* occurs before the predicate, and cases where it can be negated may be compared to adverbs in sentences like:

- (104) Bylo zhárko  
was-IMPERS warm-ADV  
'It was warm.'

These impersonal sentences with an adverb indicate a state and do not point at the relation between a participant and the way in which the participant is affected.

The exact relationship between the syntactic status of the constituents and the information structure merits further investigation. In this respect, some interesting statistical data are provided by Sirotinina (1965: 118), who gives a list of the relations between the order of the predicate and the copulative element in the case of different predicates. The above-mentioned modal predicates (*dolzhen, možhno, nado, nuzhno*) occur in 99.8% of the investigated cases with post position of the copulative element. On the other side of the scale we find predicates like *ubezhden* ('convinced') and *uveren* ('sure'), which in her collection of data only occur with the copulative element before the

predicate.<sup>48</sup> Most predicates, however, occur with both configurations. I think it would be interesting to look at whether the predicate can occur with other constituents that may be focused, whether a nominative subject or a dative subject can be expressed, and whether and where negation occurs in the sentence.

I argued above that the special behavior of the verb *byt'* in the case of some modal forms is connected with its auxiliary status. This auxiliary status is the result of the predicative status of the modal form. As I explained, modal forms have some particular semantic features that enable them to be perceived in time. However, this does not explain the relation between the predicative interpretation and the *information structure* of the sentence. In the following I will try to give an answer to the question of how the information structure *adverb/adjective verb* is related to the idea of embedding in time of the first constituent.

The explanation of the information structure and the predicative status of the adverb is not an easy task, because it is not clear on what deeper level of abstraction a possible explanation should be based, and how/ whether such an explanation could possibly be falsified. The first thing to do, then, is to see whether in other domains of the language there is a correspondence between the information structure in question, and the status of predicativity of one of the elements in the structure. A second step would be to try to find a deeper level to explain the phenomena in question. The direction in which these steps should be taken is suggested by Keijsper (1985, 1994). Keijsper (1985: 333) suggests that one might explain the difference between the placement of the copula in the case of modal adverbs in the same way as one explains the difference between the word order in the case of sentences like *On gotóv byl* (he ready was), with a so-called 'backward link' and *On byl gotóv* (he was ready), with a so-called 'forward link'. For a further analysis of the theory of linking, sentence accent, and word order I refer the reader to Keijsper (1985, 1994). Here, I will only make a few suggestions.

Both in the case of modal adverbs, and in the case of *On gotóv byl*, the predicate is expressed before the verb *byt'*. In these cases the verb *byt'* can be seen as an auxiliary of tense, because it only *repeats* that some action is the case. In the sentence *On byl gotóv*, however, it is first expressed that some situation is the case, and then the identity of this

---

<sup>48</sup> However, the Adjective Verb order is, by no means ungrammatical. Some examples are given here: *I uveren byl by ja, V tom, chto ty ne dlja menja* (S. Flint); <http://www.novgorod.ru:8105/klen/html/text13.htm>. *Uveren byl, chto muzhchinu ukerashajut mysbcy.* (Ju. Vizbor, *Alternativa vershiny Kjubc*); <http://moshkow.relline.ru:5000/lat/WIZBOR/alternativa.txt>. *A glavnoe – ubezhden byl v sobstvennoj nevinovnosti i potomu otbivalsja s umom.* (E. Xaekaja, *Sud'ja nepodkupnyj*); <http://kulichki-lat.rambler.ru/moshkow/HAECKAQ/judge.txt>.

situation is filled in. As such, the verb *byt'* does not function as an auxiliary of tense, but rather as a pure copula. In many cases a different order has a different 'semantics'. An example of this is given in (92) and (93).

In (92), two independent events are presented, whereas in (93) the second event is presented as the cause of the first event. It seems to me that the explanation for this semantic difference is the same as in the case of the modal adverbs. In both of these the element that is already established as being the case occurs first, giving rise to the auxiliary status of the verb *byt'*. A final question that remains to be answered is *why* the specific order is related to the predicative interpretation. In my opinion the answer to this question must be stated in terms of our cognition, and the way we process information. It may be connected to do with our tendency to present information about events in temporal order, and the tendency to present given information first. Note that this corresponds with the fact that in (92) the identity of the slot could in principle be filled in differently; it could for example also have been the case that it was cold, whereas in (93) the speaker has already taken the temperature into consideration. The word order mirrors the temporal order of the events as experienced by the speaker. I suspect that a similar analysis must be given for the order of the modal predicates.

I have discussed the status of *byt'* in modal forms in some detail. How can we apply the findings here to the status of *byt'* in the DI-construction? The syntactic similarities between the modal forms and the DI-construction are listed below:

*Modal adverb*

- *Byt'* cliticizes to modal adverb/ adjective
- *Byt'* cannot be accented
- *Byt'* cannot be negated
- The negation is placed before the modal adverb/ adjective

*DI-construction*

- *Byt'* can occur as a clitic to the infinitive or as a non-clitic (before the infinitive)
- *Byt'* cannot be accented
- *Byt'* cannot be negated
- The negation is placed before the infinitive

As we can see from the above information, an important similarity between the DI-construction and the modals is that the negation cannot occur before *byt'*. An important difference is that the negation is placed before the modal element in the case of the modal predicate, whereas in the case of the DI-construction, the negation occurs before the infinitive.

I would like to suggest that *byt'* in the DI-construction can be seen as an auxiliary of time. In the case of sentences like *Nam bylo ne vstavat' rano* ('We didn't have to get up early'), the form of *byt'* expresses the time to which the situation of 'the subject being under the influence of a force compelling it to the infinitive action' is related. The auxiliary cannot be negated because this would yield a reading where it is stated that the dative participant is the experiencer of some action, and at the same time it is stated that this is not the case. The impossibility of negating *byt'* occurs in the modal cases where there is always an association between the infinitive and some agent.

The analysis given here motivates the position of the negation in a straightforward way, taking the semantics of the construction into account. It shows that in order to account for the presence of negation no appeal has to be made to phenomena such as 'negation transportation'. Such an analysis is given by Rappaport (1985: 211), who claims that the negation is moved from the verb *byt'* to the infinitive. This analysis is probably based on the assumption that the modal meaning of the construction can be ascribed to one constituent, namely the verb *byt'*. It may be clear that in my opinion this is not correct: the modality of the construction is an interpretative phenomenon that cannot be ascribed to one constituent. The same confusion between meaning and interpretation can be found in Schoorlemmer (1995: 66), who posits a null modal element in the construction. In her analysis, she is not able to account for the position of negation.

As I have explained, the impossibility of negating *bylol budet* in the DI-construction may be motivated by the modal nature of the combination of pronoun and infinitive. There are, however, some possible historical data that point to a different situation. According to Veyrenc (1979: 42), in Old Russian and even until the seventeenth century the copula could be negated, while the construction also had a modal meaning (see Nikiforov, 1952: 191–223). In my opinion, however, this is not sufficient evidence for the status of the construction in modern Russian. It seems to me that the different syntactic behavior of the construction in Old Russian must first of all be attributed to a different meaning and use of *byt'* in Old Russian.<sup>49</sup>

---

<sup>49</sup> Nikiforov (1952: 191–223), in his discussion of the DI-construction in sixteenth-century Russian, only gives examples of the DI-construction where the negation occurs before the infinitive, and examples of the

If there has been a historical change, it may be that there has been a development from *byt'* as the predicative center of the DI-construction to a situation where the predicative center is implied by the combination of dative and infinitive, and where *byt'* has become an auxiliary. Perhaps, this development was made possible by the modal meaning of the construction, as I explained earlier. It could be that when the function of *byt'* developed from a predicative verb to a verb with the status of an auxiliary, its status became marginal.<sup>50</sup>

As Maurice (1996: 85) remarks, the status of the auxiliary in the DI-construction is marginal because it is not possible to make a complete tense paradigm with every infinitive sentence. In many cases it is theoretically possible to fit in *bylo*, in other cases it is doubtful, and sometimes it is not possible at all. The expression of *budet* is even more restricted than that of *bylo*. In my opinion, the present marginal status of *byt'* must be explained in terms of the interference between tense and modality. A problem with this analysis is that in the case of lexical modal items like *nado*, we find the whole tense paradigm (Maurice, 1996: 85):

- (105) Emu nado (∅/ budet/ bylo) uexat'.  
 he-DAT necessary-ADV be-PRES/ FUT/ PAST go  
 'He has to/ will have to/ had to go'

It seems to me, however, that if one wishes to explain the occurrence of *byt'* in terms of interference between tense and modality, the infinitive construction and modal lexical items cannot be treated in the same way. In the case of the infinitive construction the modality is syntactically derived, and not lexically expressed, which has important consequences for the semantic and syntactic properties of the construction. I will discuss this later in more detail.

Having now discussed the meanings of the constituents in the DI-construction (dative, infinitive, auxiliary), I will discuss what the abstract meaning of the construction is.

---

present tense where *byt'* is not expressed. This is not to say, of course, that in older stages the DI-construction might not have been different in nature. That this might have been the case is also suggested by the fact that in older stages of Russian, *bylol budet* was more frequently expressed than in modern Russian (Maurice, 1996: 85).

<sup>50</sup> It must be remarked that this is a very general and incomplete sketch of the status of *byt'*. Important questions that have to be answered are (a) what was the exact meaning of the DI-construction in Old Russian?, (b) how can this specific meaning be linked to the status of the constituents?, (c) has there been a development in the structure of the DI-construction?, and (d) if so, why?

## **4.6 Meaning and syntactic structure of the DI-construction**

In the preceding sections, I have discussed the meaning and use of the various constituents in the DI-construction. In this section I will show how we can derive an abstract meaning of the DI-construction by composition of the various meanings in that construction. I will argue that the predicative element of the construction cannot be identified with a specific form, but arises because the non-specified infinitive agent is unified/ associated with the participant expressed in the dative. This means that the verbal head of the DI-construction, the modal element, is syntactically derived. I will first discuss the abstract meaning of the DI-construction, and then discuss the question of to which constituent the modal meaning of the construction must be attributed.

### **4.6.1 The abstract meaning**

In the DI-construction we find the following constituents with their meanings:

- dative noun: active experiencer, recipient of situation *s*
- infinitive: situation type with associated agent *a*
- *bylól budet* (in some cases) : auxiliary of tense of situation *s*

How do these constituents combine? The semantic structure of an instance of the DI-construction can informally be represented in a tree (Figure 4.6).

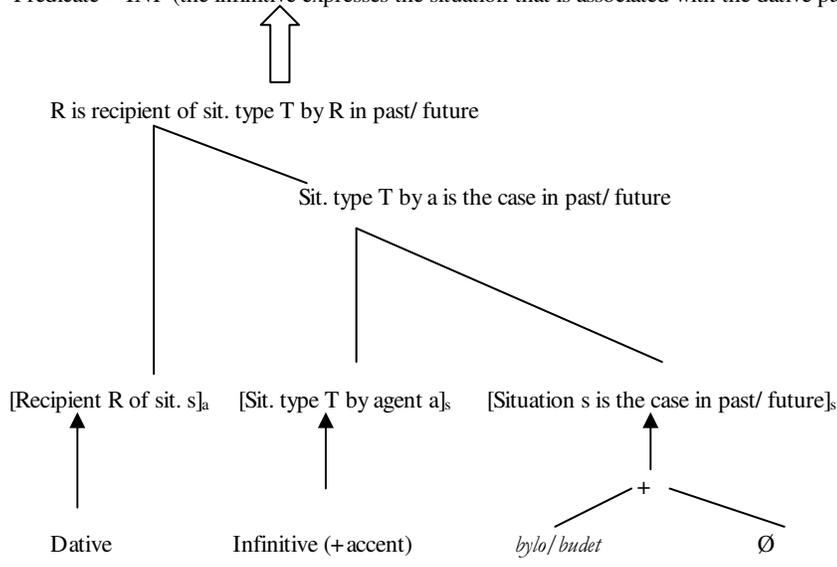
The infinitive can be seen as the predicate of the sentence in the sense that it expresses the situation that is associated with the dative participant. Note, however, that the head or verbal element of the sentence can be identified with the idea that is the result of the application of the dative to the infinitive, and is as such an interpretative phenomenon. The verb *byt'* can be identified with an auxiliary of tense.<sup>51</sup> In some cases no dative participant is expressed. In such cases the agent of the infinitive must be identified with a potential agent given in the context (for example the speaker), or with a generic agent. The information structure of the DI-construction may differ from instance to instance. In some cases the infinitive can be identified with the focus (rheme) of the sentence, while in other cases the dative must be identified with the focus (rheme) of the sentence.

---

<sup>51</sup> In many cases *bylo* occurs *before* the infinitive. In such cases the verb *byt'* must still be seen as an auxiliary.

Figure 4.6

V = non-expressed (IS THE CASE, APPLIES, MUST, CAN, etc., depending on the context)  
 'Predicate' = INF (the infinitive expresses the situation that is associated with the dative participant)



On the basis of the meanings and the syntactic process given above the *abstract* meaning of the infinitive construction can informally be described as in Figure 4.7.

It should be noted that the description given here does not apply to the existential construction, or to constructions with an adverbial predicate. In the case of the existential construction the infinitive must be seen as a specification of the pronoun/ adverb. In this construction the dative participant is therefore only *indirectly* the recipient of the situation expressed by the infinitive. In the case of constructions with an adverbial predicate and an infinitive, the infinitive must be seen as a specification-complement of the adverbial predicate (see 4.4.4.3). Note, however, that sentences with an adverbial predicate and infinitive sentences share important properties, which is underlined by the occurrence of sentences that share properties with both the DI-construction, and constructions with an adverbial predicate (see 4.16.1).

Above I have given the abstract meaning of the DI-construction. Four important remarks have to be made about this meaning:

*Meaning and interpretation of the DI-construction*

- (i) The meaning given here describes the basic uses of the DI-construction; peripheral uses must be analyzed in terms of selection and backgrounding of features.
- (ii) The meaning given here does not predict the entire possible range of the DI-construction, but gives enough information to understand the different uses of the construction.
- (iii) The subject status of the dative differs from the subject status of the nominative.
- (iv) The expression of the dative is semantically motivated.

I will briefly discuss these below.

Figure 4.7

- 
- The dative expresses the idea of a recipient rec: [rec = recipient of situation s]<sub>potential agent</sub>
  - [recipient of situation s]<sub>potential agent</sub> *presupposes* force F that brings about [realization of situation s by agent a]
  - The infinitive expresses the idea of a situation type INF: [situation type INF by non-specified agent a]<sub>situation</sub>
  - [dative rec] + [infinitive INF]: rec is the potential agent of INF because of the existence of F

*Interpretation:*

**Some force is directed at the realization of the situation expressed by the infinitive of which the dative participant is the *potential agent***

As I will show in my analysis of the different uses of the construction, the idea of recipienthood of a situation presupposes an initial information state where the dative participant is *not* associated with the realization of the infinitive situation (or in the case of negation, where the dative participant *is* associated with the infinitive situation), which is contradicted.

---

Firstly, the description of the DI-construction given above must be seen as an 'idealized' interpretation, that is, it must be seen as an abstraction from different instances of the construction, where information about the lexical meaning of the

infinitive, nature of the dative participant, etc. is abstracted. The meaning must account for a whole range of different uses, ranging from the more *prototypical* cases of the DI-construction, to the more *peripheral* ones. The occurrence of prototype effects can be motivated by the fact that case meaning occurs in a clearly delineated system of oppositions. The choice of case can therefore best be explained in terms of choosing the *optimal* case from the case system.

As I will argue below, the idea of being the recipient of a situation type can be interpreted differently, depending on the context in which it occurs. In some cases the idea of recipienthood is connected with the presence of an identifiable force, such as a norm, script, or observable pattern in nature or ‘fate’ that brings the situation about. This is the case for example in sentences that can be classified as cases of so-called (de)ontic necessity (if the force is a norm or script) or epistemic-ontic necessity (if the force is ‘fate’, or ‘the way things go’). The idea of recipienthood is, however, less clear in some other contexts, for example in cases with the conjunctions *esli* (‘if’), *pered tem kak* (‘before’), and in some cases that express possibility, for example contrastive contexts such as (6). As I mentioned above, an important feature of the DI-construction is that the initial information state that the dative participant is not associated with the realization of the infinitive situation, is contradicted. In my analysis I will show that the dative noun is triggered in these contexts because of this particular feature, and that these cases can be analyzed as cases of so-called ‘epistemic deblocking’.

Secondly, the meaning given above, derived by composition of the components of the construction, must be sustained by a description based on abstraction over the different uses of the construction. The compositional analysis cannot predict which uses of the DI-construction are possible, and which uses are not. This can be underlined if we look at the use of the DI-construction in older stages of Russian. The uses of the DI-construction in the sixteenth century discussed by Nikiforov (1952: 196–203) cannot all be paraphrased with a DI-construction in modern Russian, although they can all be understood by a speaker of present day Russian. More specifically, the use of the DI-construction to express necessity was less confined than it is now (Maurice, 1996). The change in use of the DI-construction may possibly be attributed to a change in the system of oppositional forms.

Thirdly, the subject status of the dative differs from the status of the nominative subject. In 3.1 I illustrated the conceptualization expressed by a nominative subject with an example of a prototypical scene for the nominative, viz. the movement of a ball flying through the air. In this case we see the movement as a property of the ball, that is,

although the ball and its movement may be conceptualized separately, they are not conceptualized independently of each other. This can be expressed in language as 'The ball is flying'. The inflection on the verb indicates that the action is related to person, and to time; this means that the subject and the verb are interdependent (finite verb presupposes subject, subject presupposes finite verb). This conceptualization differs from the dative in combination with the infinitive. In the case of the dative subject and the infinitive predicate, the realization of the action and the subject of the action are independently conceptualized. Since the situation is assigned to the dative participant by some force, and the dative participant is not the initiator of the situation, the situational scene is conceptualized as the coming into being of/ something that may lead to the situation expressed by the infinitive. This means that the scene is conceptualized in two moments, viz. a moment where the situation does not take place, and a moment where the situation takes place, namely the moment where the dative participant is the subject of the situation. In contrast to the nominative-finite verb construction, the dative subject is only a *potential* subject, because the conceptualization does not convey whether the subject will actually give in to the force and realize the infinitive action.

The assignment of a situation type to some participant in the dative creates a predicative relationship: the situation is related to the participant, which is to realize the infinitive situation. Because of the predicative nature of the unification of the non-expressed infinitive agent (PRO) with the dative participant the status of cases in which the dative is assigned to second predicates (*odin* ('alone'), *sam* ('self')) can be compared to sentences (S) or subordinate sentences (S'). The predicative moment that is constituted by the relating of the infinitive predicate to the dative subject creates the idea of a phenomenon perceived in time; this phenomenon can be seen as the 'verbal' element of the construction. I suspect that the verbal element of the construction with a dative subject and the infinitive predicate is expressed by the combination of the dative and the infinitive. This means that it is not expressed by one form, and must be seen as an epiphenomenon of the construction. The subject dative in combination with the infinitive predicate is capable of conveying verbalness (the conceptualization of some scene in time) because the idea of recipienthood always presupposes change in time, viz. a change from the scene where the subject is not receiving the action, to a scene where the subject is the receiver of some action.<sup>52</sup>

Fourthly, the expression of the dative is semantically motivated. In the generative literature the occurrence of the dative in the case of the DI-construction is 'explained'

---

<sup>52</sup> In the case of expressions such as *mne xolodno* (I-DAT cold-ADV) the change in time has a very abstract character.

by stating a rather mechanical rule, viz. a rule that assigns the dative case to PRO (e.g. Franks, 1990; Komar, 1999), or a rule that states that PRO is dative (e.g. Comrie, 1974; Neidle, 1988).<sup>53</sup> Although such rule may partly capture particular regularities in the linguistic data, no explanation for the rule itself is given. In my opinion, a semantically-conceptually based analysis can provide a deeper level of explanation, because it can motivate *why* the case of PRO may be dative. A further shortcoming of the postulation of such a non-motivated rule is that in some cases it fails to make correct observations. It does not account for the nominative-infinitive construction, where the infinitive occurs with a nominative subject (e.g. (74)–(76)), or cases where the infinitive construction cannot occur with a subject at all (e.g. (77)–(80)):

- (106) Tebe\* mnogo **znat'** – tebe\* malo **spat'**. (Compare (79))  
 they-DAT many know-INF – they-DAT few sleep-INF
- (107) Strannye ljudi, eti Kresse! Im\* **skazat'** pri mal'chiku takuju veshch'! (Compare (78))  
 strange people, those Cretians! They-DAT say-INF at boy such a thing

Neidle (1988: 152) tries to account for cases with a nominative subject such as (74) by saying that this construction contains a null verb with the meaning 'starting'. This analysis, however, does not explain *how* this meaning comes about, and why in some cases, for example *Ja revnovat'*? (I be.jealous-INF, 'Me-be jealous?'), the meaning of the proposed null verb is different. Franks (1990: 237) tries to account for the absence of a subject in cases like (78) by claiming that dative subjects are licensed only when in the scope of a tense operator in C, or to put it differently, dative subjects only occur in clauses with tense. In my opinion tense is not a necessary part of the construction with a dative subject (see for example (9)–(11) above). Note furthermore that in most cases no tense is expressed for the DI-construction; as I will argue below the absence of tense has a semantic-pragmatic nature.

The impossibility of expressing a dative has a semantic reason. Above I have argued that the impossibility of inserting a dative in (79) is connected with the obligatory generic status of the infinitive subject in this construction. The absence of tense in most cases is connected with the fact that such sentences do not refer to a specific scene in time, but have a more general character; in some cases, however, a

---

<sup>53</sup> For the exact interpretation of these rules I refer the reader to these analyses.

tense operator may be expressed.<sup>54</sup> In the case of (78) the absence of the (subject) dative is connected with the absence of the idea of a force.

In my opinion, it makes no sense to assign case to the non-expressed subject of the infinitive (PRO) or to posit an underlying element PRO that already has case. The non-expressed subject of the infinitive, PRO, cannot be seen as an individual subject, since it must be seen as an abstraction from individual subjects, which means that we cannot conceptualize PRO as a specific entity. However, if the infinitive predicate occurs with a dative subject, PRO is *unified* or *associated* with the dative subject.

#### 4.6.2 The modal nature of the DI-construction

In the preceding section I discussed the abstract meaning of the DI-construction; in this section I wish to argue against the idea expressed in the literature on the DI-construction that the so-called ‘modal’ meaning of the construction must be attributed to one of the constituents in the construction.

I have argued that we can account for the modal character of the DI-construction if we look at the meanings of the constituents in the construction and the way in which they are combined. In the literature on the DI-construction, opinions differ about how the different meanings contribute to the meaning of the DI-construction, and how the DI-construction should be analyzed both semantically and syntactically. Three main opinions exist about why the DI-construction is modal in nature:

- (i) Because of the presence of a non-expressed modal element (Wierzbicka, 1966; Kondrashova, 1994; Junghanns, 1994; Schoorlemmer, 1995)
- (ii) Because of the presence of the infinitive (Ebeling, 1984; Růzhichka, 1994)
- (iii) Because of the presence of *byt'* (Veyrenc, 1979)

I wish to argue that the modal meaning of the DI-construction is an interpretation of the combination of the dative with the infinitive in a particular context, viz. in a context where the non-specified infinitive agent is associated with a particular agent expressed by the dative. This means that I reject the idea that the modality can be attributed solely to one of the expressed or non-expressed constituents in the sentence. I will now briefly discuss the analyses mentioned above.

---

<sup>54</sup> Note that in these cases no dative noun can be expressed, but the case of the adjuncts *odin* and *sam* is dative (see 4.17).

The first possibility is advocated in an early work of Wierzbicka (1966) and by scholars working in a generative framework (Schoorlemmer, 1995; Kondrashova, 1994; and Junghanns, 1994). Wierzbicka claims that the DI-construction has essentially the same structure as sentences with a dative subject and an adverbial predicate like:

- (108) Mne legko bylo rabotat'.  
 I-DAT easy-ADV it.was work-INF  
 'I found it easy to work.'

Wierzbicka claims that in such sentences we find the following semantic information: (a) subject of the state (*mne*), (b) process (*bylo*), (c) property (*legko*), (d) object of the state (*rabotat'*). In the case of the DI-construction we find exactly the same structure, a null predicate (and often a null copula).

Generative treatments of the modal infinitive construction (Schoorlemmer, 1995; Junghanns, 1994) assume a non-overt modal predicate comparable to modal predicates like *nado* ('must', 'have to'). According to these studies, the positing of a null predicate explains some syntactic features of the modal infinitive construction, especially the occurrence of the structural dative (Schoorlemmer, 1995: 66), although it does not account for the position of the negation in such sentences (Schoorlemmer, 1995: 66).

In my opinion, it is not correct to speak of a null predicate in the case of the infinitive construction because the status of such a null predicate remains unclear. It is not clear (a) *why* a null predicate occurs in the case of the infinitive construction, (b) what the meaning is of this predicate, (c) why the null predicate is sometimes interpreted as a case of necessity and sometimes as a case of (im)possibility and (d) what the relation is between the so-called modal uses and the non-modal uses of the DI-construction. Further evidence that one cannot speak of a null predicate in the case of the DI-construction is that the syntactic possibilities of the DI-construction and sentences with modal adverbs are different. As I will discuss below, the semantic-syntactic behaviour of sentences with modal adverbs such as *nado* and *možno* is different from the semantic-syntactic behavior of the DI-construction. If we claim, that in the case of the DI there is a null adverb that behaves in the same way as an overt adverb, we cannot adequately explain the differences in combinatory possibilities between the DI and the overt adverb.<sup>55</sup>

---

<sup>55</sup> In some specific cases, however, the combination of a dative and an infinitive is better analyzed in terms of ellipsis. This is the case for example in the following sentence *A mne, a mne posmotret', – sheptala neterpelivaja moja ljubov' (...)*. (M. Kononenko, *Tango*; <http://www.litera.ru:8085/slova/tango.htm>; but I-

I have claimed that it is incorrect to posit a null predicate in the case of the DI-construction. However, I do not think that the idea of a null predicate is entirely erroneous. In the case of the DI-construction, the predicative idea of the sentence (is the case, applies, must, can, etc.) is not formally expressed, because it is *induced* by the combination of the dative and the infinitive. If some agent is the recipient of a situation type, this implies the idea of a predicative scene, viz. the situation that there is some external force that compels the agent to do the action. This means that in the case of the DI-construction, the predicative center is not formally expressed, but only implied. As such, the predicate cannot be seen as a null form that functions independently of the other constituents in the sentence. The relation between the DI-construction and sentences with an adverbial predicate can be made clear with the interpretation of *mne stat' chlenom ètogo sojuza* in the following two sentences:

- (109) Legche verbludu projti skvoz' igol'noe ushko, chem **mne stat'** chlenom ètogo sojuza.<sup>56</sup>  
easier camel-DAT pass through needle eye, than I-DAT become-INF-PERF member  
of.that union  
'It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for me to become a  
member of that union.'
- (110) **Mne stat'** chlenom ètogo sojuza.  
I-DAT become-INF-PERF member of.that union  
'I will become a member of that union.'

In the first sentence *mne stat' chlenom ètogo sojuza* is interpreted in the domain of the predicative adverb *legche* (it is easier). This means that the dative expresses the recipient of a state, whose the identity is filled in by the infinitive. In the second sentence no predicative adverb is expressed. In this sentence the predicate is expressed by the infinitive. The verbal element of the sentence is an interpretative phenomenon that expresses the idea of predicativity in its most basic form, viz. 'is the case', or 'applies to an agent'. Because of the specific context (dative, aspect, etc.) this meaning is interpreted as a case of epistemic-ontic necessity, expressing the infinitive situation will necessarily be the case.

The second possibility, viz. that the modal meaning of the DI-construction is due to the meaning of the infinitive is advocated by both Rùzhichka (1994) and Ebeling

---

DAT, but I-DAT look-INF-PERF, whispered impatient my love; 'Let me have a look, let me have a look, whispered my impatient love.')

<sup>56</sup> <http://trn.jazz.ru/books/markin/50.htm>

(1984); Růzhichka (1994) does not motivate the modal meaning of the infinitive, so I will not go into his analysis here. Ebeling (1984) points out that some infinitive sentences occur without a dative and copula but still have a modal character. These are sentences with a non-expressed and generically understood subject like the following:

- (111) Zdes' ne **projti**.  
 Here not go through-INF-PERF  
 'One can't trespass here.'

This could be seen as an argument in favor of the idea that the modal character of the infinitive construction must be sought in the meaning of the infinitive itself. According to Ebeling, the infinitive “presents a fact as a member of a pair of facts, the relation between the two being ‘accompanying’” (1984: 128). Ebeling’s description applies to all infinitive cases and is the basis of the modal meaning of the infinitive. The meaning is interpreted differently depending on the context in which the infinitive occurs. In the case of the modal infinitive construction ‘accompanying’ takes the shape of ‘giving rise to’. This means that there is some situation that ‘furthers’ the coming into existence of another fact.

As I already argued in 4.4.1, I do not think it would be right to attribute the modal character of the construction to the *meaning* of the infinitive, as Ebeling does. In my opinion, it is the specific *use* of the infinitive that creates a modal interpretation in cases like (111); infinitives are capable of being interpreted as such because of their specific meaning of situation type. A sentence like (111) expresses that the not reaching of the terminus of the situation expressed by the infinitive is applied to an unspecified agent. If a situation has a general application, it can be interpreted such that there must be some force that is compelling any agent (or put differently, the unspecified agent) toward this action, hence the modal interpretation. As in this case the infinitive action is not initiated by the agent himself, the agent can be seen as an entity with a status that is close to that of a recipient.<sup>57</sup> In sentences like (111) it is possible not to express the agent-subject because in Russian a zero subject form is (under specific circumstances) to be interpreted as a generic subject.

In my opinion, the occurrence of sentences like (111) does not imply that in sentences where a dative *is* expressed, it does not contribute to the modal nature of the construction. Furthermore, I do not think that something like a modal *meaning* should

---

<sup>57</sup> I do not wish to claim that one should speak of a zero recipient in such cases. The term recipient must be reserved for linguistic expressions.

be attributed to the infinitive form. However, the combination of the meaning of the infinitive and a specific context may yield a modal interpretation

The third possibility, viz. that the modal interpretation of the DI-construction can be ascribed to the impersonal use of *byt'*, is advocated by Veyrenc (1979: 37–39). According to him, across languages we find that verbs which indicate possession or existence can also indicate necessity (or impossibility). Languages usually fall in one of the two groups. In languages like English the verb ‘to have’ is used to indicate necessity (*he has to go*), whereas in languages like Finnish and Hungarian, the verb ‘to be’ is used to express necessity.

Of course, I cannot deny the facts presented by Veyrenc, but I do not think that this typological evidence can be seen as evidence that in the Russian construction the modality must be described solely to the verb *byt'*. To motivate this, an analysis must be given of how *byt'* accounts for the modal interpretation of the construction. Unfortunately, Veyrenc does not give such an analysis. Ebeling (1984: 107) rejects the analysis given by Veyrenc because in many cases the verb *byt'* does not occur (more specifically in the case of the present tense); in my opinion, this is not a very strong argument against Veyrenc, since *byt'* can, under specific circumstances, be expressed in the past and the future tense. A better argument against Veyrenc’s position is the marginal position of *byt'* in the DI-construction, and the impossibility of expressing *byt'* at all in some cases (for example sentences with subordinators) that nevertheless have a modal character. As such, the modality cannot be ascribed to the verb *byt'*.

I have argued that I do not think the verb ‘be’ on its own contributes to the modal meaning of the DI-construction. I have in fact argued that the modal character of the construction is the result of the interaction of all the components, and cannot be seen as a meaning but rather as an interpretation. In the following section, I will discuss how the construction is interpreted in the different contexts.

#### **4.7 On the interpretation of the DI-construction**

In the sections above I have discussed the meanings of the different constituents in the DI-construction, and the meaning of the construction as a whole. I have argued that the meaning of the construction must be defined both as a composition of the meanings of its constituent parts, and as an abstraction from the total of occurrences of the construction. In this section I will go into the question of how the DI-

construction can be interpreted, and what the relation is between particular interpretations and particular context types.

In the literature it is generally accepted (e.g. Timofeev, 1950; Bricyn, 1990; Maurice, 1996) that the DI-construction has different uses.<sup>58</sup> Bricyn (1990), for example, gives a main classification into the following types: (a) necessity (*dolzhenstvovanie*) or absence of necessity, (b) predestination (*predopredelenost'*) or negation of predestination, (c) impossibility (*nevozmozhnost'*) and in some special cases possibility, (d) purpose-wish (*celesoobraznost'-zhelatel'nost'*), (e) directive sentences (*pobuditel'nye predlozhenija*), and (f) interrogative sentences (*voprositel'nye predlozhenija*). This classification is based on the semantic differences between the different uses, which are made visible by the different ways in which they can be paraphrased with other forms in Russian. The classification further treats declarative, directive and interrogative sentences separately, notwithstanding the fact that interrogative sentences can also be classified as cases of (negation of) necessity or (im)possibility.

Maurice (1996) gives a similar classification based on semantic criteria, but places more emphasis on the existence of context types. In her study of the modal infinitive construction, she makes a main division between non-interrogative sentences and interrogative sentences. Non-interrogative sentences are classified into declarative sentences, sentences with *by*, and directive sentences. The declarative sentences are further classified according to aspect, presence or absence of negation, and other formal features such as the presence of particles (*zhe*) and the Aktionsart of the verb. The interrogative sentences are further classified according to the type of interrogative adverb or pronoun, and of the presence of other forms (such as *li*, *mozhet*). The different context types constituted by these different forms (negation, particles, etc.), and meanings (aspect, lexical classes) roughly correspond to the semantic types given by Bricyn (1990).

Classifications of the DI-construction in the literature such as the ones discussed here show that (i) the DI-construction has different uses, (ii) the different instances of the construction all have a so-called 'modal' meaning, (iii) particular uses are confined to specific contexts, and (iv) in some cases no clear boundaries can be drawn between different uses. These observed phenomena point to the interpretative status of the different uses. The different uses cannot be seen as meanings, but are all interpretations

---

<sup>58</sup> Note that different authors use different terms for the construction that I call the DI-construction. Bricyn (1990) calls instances of this construction 'infinitive sentences', according to the classification of the infinitive as a predicate. Maurice (1996) speaks about 'modal infinitive sentences', according to the modal nature of the construction. I will maintain the term DI-construction..

of the same abstract meaning, or put differently, are all interpretations of the interaction of the same meanings, viz. infinitive and dative.

In the literature, the question of why these different interpretations occur, and how these interpretations can be motivated by the meaning of the construction and the context in which it occurs has not been systematically addressed by most authors. An exception is Maurice (1995, 1996), who points to the fact that the two main interpretations of the DI-construction without *by*, viz. necessity and impossibility, can be motivated by the intention that may be ascribed to the dative participant. In the case of the necessitive interpretation, no intention is ascribed to the dative subject, whereas in the case of the impossibility interpretation, an intention to realize the action can be ascribed to the dative subject. The question of whether an intention can be ascribed or not in most cases corresponds with the aspect of the infinitive. In the case of the impossibility interpretation the perfective aspect prototypically occurs, whereas in the case of the necessitive interpretation the imperfective aspect prototypically occurs.

Maurice (1995, 1996) does not systematically go into the question of how the different interpretations of the DI-construction are related to the meaning of the construction, or the meaning of its component parts. Furthermore, she does not systematically address the question of why in declarative sentences the possibility interpretation occurs in very specific contexts only, and why in interrogative sentences it occurs without restriction. In my opinion, this is connected with the fact that she tries to analyze the modal meaning of the construction in terms of modal logic operators. She (1995: 151–152) asserts that the basic modality of the DI-construction is necessity; she motivates this with the modal logic equation: *Necessary (not X) = not possible (X)*. According to this equation, the uses that express impossibility can be analyzed as necessitive uses and uses that express possibility must be reduced to negation as well.

Maurice (1995, 1996) discusses two uses that express possibility, viz. uses with *edva* ('hardly') and *tol'ko* ('only'):<sup>59</sup>

- (112) Ulicy takie uzkie, chto edva **razminut'sja dvum mashinam**. (Maurice, 1995: 151/ *Russkaja Grammatika*, 1980)  
streets so small, that hardly overtake-INF-PERF two-DAT cars-DAT  
'The streets are so narrow that two cars can hardly overtake each other.'
- (113) A i tol'ko v vyrezy **murashu projti**. (Maurice, 1995: 151/ *Byliny*)

---

<sup>59</sup> Maurice (1996: 152) explicitly states that she will not discuss sentences with *chtoby*.

but and only in hole ant-DAT go.through-INF-PERF  
 'But only an ant can go through those holes.'

She claims about such uses that they can be seen as cases of restricted possibility, and that restricted possibility can be seen as impossibility in a broader sense. She motivates the reason *why* the DI-construction expresses only necessity or impossibility, by pointing at the fact that necessity is more informative than possibility: "How can one explain that impossibility is more central than possibility? Possibly because it is more informative. When I know that someone can do something, then I don't know whether he will do it or not. When I know, however, that someone can't do something, I can suppose that he won't do it." (my translation; Maurice, 1996: 282). She (1995, 1996) concludes that the DI-construction only expresses the more informative modalities.

The analysis given by Maurice (1995, 1996) has a number of weak points. Firstly, if all uses express necessity, and impossibility can be reduced to necessity by means of a logical operation, we need additional logical rules in order to apply the operation in the case of restricted possibility: *only possible X ≠ necessary only X*; the right side of the equation is stronger.

Secondly, if all uses must be reduced to necessity, it is not clear how we should deal with cases where the possibility interpretation cannot be reduced to negation at all, e.g. sentences with *chtoby*:

- (114) Polez zhilin v dyru, chtob i Kostylinu prolezt'. (Garde, 1963: 291/ Tolstoj)  
 climbed Zhilin in hole, in.order that Kostylin-DAT pass.through-INF-PERF  
 'Zhilin climbed into the hole, so that Kostylin could pass through as well.'

It is unclear how the equation given above can be applied in this case.

Thirdly, Maurice analyzes all cases of the DI-construction as uses that express notions such as 'necessity' or 'possibility'. In some cases, however, it is questionable whether an analysis in terms of either necessity or possibility does justice to specific use of the construction. This is the case for example with uses with the particle *by*. One can of course try to classify such uses as cases of necessity or possibility, but these are only theoretical notions, and not concepts expressed by the construction itself.

Fourthly, the motivation for the basic meaning of necessity of the DI-construction is rather implausible. No motivation is given for why in the case of the DI-construction the 'weak' modality of possibility cannot be expressed, whereas it can be expressed with other forms or other constructions in the linguistic system (e.g. *mozhno*).

Furthermore, it remains unclear why in some cases, for example sentences with *by*, the construction is not interpreted as a case of necessity or impossibility.

The problematic nature of Maurice's analysis is connected with the logical model she uses for modality. In my opinion, the way she uses modal logic operators has two weaknesses: (i) The model defines modality extensionally, and not intensionally, and (ii) the model ascribes meaning to a form, whereas in the case of the DI-construction the modality is an interpretative phenomenon.

Firstly, the model that she uses defines modality extensionally; that is, it defines what the result is of some 'must' or 'can' situation, rather than how this situation comes about. In such models, 'necessary x' is defined as a situation where in all possible worlds x is the case, whereas 'possible X' is defined as a situation where in some worlds X is the case. This description of modality lacks important information in the description of modality for the DI-construction; viz. it lacks the information of how the described situation comes about.

Secondly, the model used in Maurice (1995, 1996) analyzes the modal feature of the construction as a definable operator. Such an analysis does not explain how this operator comes about in the construction, and why it does not occur in all instances of the construction. More particularly, it does not take account of the inherent fuzzy nature of the modality in the case of the DI-construction. As I will argue, the meaning of 'recipient of a situation type' cannot be *equated* with 'necessity', but can be interpreted as such in some contexts. The notion of 'necessity' as defined in the model used by Maurice has no conceptual status, but is rather a mathematical idealization of conceptualization.

The problematic aspects connected to the analysis given by Maurice (1995, 1996) can be solved if we look at the *meaning* of the construction. If we do this, we can motivate why the construction can express both necessity and impossibility, and why the possibility interpretation is restricted to specific contexts. If we try to account for the use of the construction in this way it becomes unnecessary to posit modal logic operators as defined in logical models.

The shortcomings of the modal logic model in the analysis of modal predicates in natural language are absent in more cognitively oriented models of modality, such as that of Talmy (1985). In this model English modal verbs are described in terms of *Force Dynamics*. Talmy (1985) describes the meaning of modal predicates such as *can* and *must* in terms of the dynamics of different opposing forces. The following conceptual primitives play a part in the theory of force dynamics. There are two entities, that each exert a force on the other. One is foregrounded or singled out for focal attention (the

‘agonist’), the other is considered for the effect it has on the agonist (the ‘antagonist’). Entities are taken to exert a force by virtue of an intrinsic tendency toward either motion (action) or toward rest (inaction). Opposed forces have different relative strengths, and the entity that is able to manifest its tendency at the expense of its opponent is the stronger. According to their relative strengths, the opposing forces yield a resultant. This means that the agonist will either act or not act.

In Talmy (1985) modality is described in terms of two opposing forces in the following way:

Necessary  $x =_{\text{def}}$

Subject  $x =$  Agonist

Subject  $x$  has tendency to inaction (not  $X$ ) ( $\rightarrow$  Antagonist opposes this tendency)

Antagonist is stronger than subject

Possible  $x =_{\text{def}}$

Subject  $x =$  Agonist

Subject has tendency to action ( $X$ ) ( $\rightarrow$  Antagonist opposes this tendency)

Subject is stronger than Antagonist

In this model ‘necessity’ is described in terms of an imposing force, whereas ‘possibility’ is described in terms of an absent potential barrier. This can be illustrated with the following sentences:

a. I have to go to school; my mother wants me to.

b. I can sing very well; I take lessons.

In (a) the subject is presented as having no choice but to do the action; the Antagonist in this case can be identified with a specific person, namely his mother. In (b) it is expressed that if the subject wants to sing, he will do it, because he has particular properties that enable him to do so. The notion of ‘enabling’ presupposes that some force is needed to overcome the situation where one cannot sing (the situation where one takes no lessons).

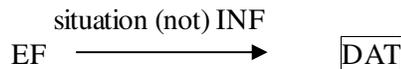
I think that the model under discussion can be used for the description of modality in the case of the DI-construction, with the following reservations. Firstly, whether the subject will act or not act is not an extensional issue. In the case of necessity the action only takes place in an ideal world; in the actual world the subject may not give in to the imposing force (e.g. *I have to go to school, but I won't do it*). In the case of possibility it can

only be *expected* that the subject will act; in the actual world the subject may not follow the initial intention to act. Secondly, in the case of the necessitive interpretation, one can speak of a tendency to inaction of the subject only in the sense that the action is *presented* as the result of some other force. The subject may agree with the intended action of the other force; as such there does not have to be a situation of *opposing* forces. This is the case for example with so-called utilitarian modality (see Shatunovskij, 1996 for a discussion of this type of modality), e.g.: *I really have to go now (in order to catch the tram, and I want to catch the tram)*, or in the case of accepted norms, where one agrees with the norms or expectations that one has to follow.

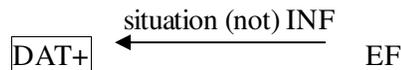
With the additions to the model of modality, the two main modal possibilities of the infinitive construction, 'necessity' and '(im)possibility' can be modeled. Proceeding from the meaning of the DI-construction given above, two main interpretations of the DI-construction are represented schematically in Figure 4.8.

Figure 4.8\*

(Negation of) necessity:



(Negation of) possibility:




---

\* DAT = dative-participant ('+' points at the intention of the potential agent to fulfill the situation), EF = contextually given external force, INF = infinitive situation, arrow represents that there is a force directed at the dative participant

The difference between the necessitive interpretation and the possibility interpretation relates to the question of whether the intention of the agent to do the situation is taken into consideration. The specific interpretation is influenced by the aspect of the infinitive verb, the presence or absence of negation in the sentence, and presuppositions of the interpreter.

In the case of necessity, the interpreter focuses on the fact that, no matter whether the potential agent wants to realize the situation or not, he will (not) be the potential agent of the infinitive situation. This means that in the case of the necessitive

interpretation, the intention of the potential agent to fulfill the situation or not is considered to be irrelevant, and the focus is on the force leading to the realization of the infinitive situation. Necessitive cases prototypically occur in the imperfective aspect.

In the case of the (im)possibility interpretation, the situation is ‘viewed’ from the point of view of the potential agent that intends to fulfill a particular situation (DAT+) but is initially not in the position to realize the situation, and the focus is on the question of whether the dative participant is in the position to realize the intended situation. Cases that express possibility prototypically occur in the perfective aspect. Note that the term ‘intention’ does not necessarily mean that the dative participant deliberately and consciously strives to realize the infinitive situation; in some cases the term ‘intention’ must be understood in a more abstract way, namely as referring to the positive attitude of the agent toward the realization of the infinitive situation.

I would like to stress that the dative participant is the *recipient* of a situation. As I mentioned above, the idea of recipienthood is connected to the contrast between the initial information state pertaining to the realization of the infinitive situation by the dative participant, and the scene expressed by the construction. In affirmative sentences the initial information state is a scene where the dative participant is not the potential agent of the infinitive situation; in negative sentences the initial information state is a scene where the dative participant is the potential agent of the infinitive situation.

In my opinion, the recipienthood of the agent can motivate the different uses of the DI-construction, especially the *ontic* character of the different uses, stressing that the realization of the infinitive situation is in full accordance with the way things are or go. The ontic character of the DI-construction is underlined by the fact that the so-called deontic use only occurs in specific contexts, and is favored by particular formal features (*eshche*, *ved'*, *zhe*, contrast). The recipienthood of the agent can also motivate why the DI-construction is only interpreted as a case of possibility in very few contexts. About the restriction on the use of possibility, I will make a few comments.

If the agent of a situation is a recipient, this means that he does not initiate the action himself. In the case of the impossibility interpretation one can speak of recipienthood because the agent is the recipient of the situation ‘not X’, whereas he has an intention to realize situation ‘X’. In the case of the possibility interpretation one can speak of recipienthood because the blocked intended situation of the dative participant is unblocked, which makes him the recipient of the situation ‘X’. As such, the possibility interpretation only occurs in very specific contexts, viz. those where the agent can be seen as a recipient, which occurs in contexts where the action is

unblocked. These contexts are provided by interrogatives, negation, contrastive sentences, *tol'keo* ('only'), *˘ot'* ('even'), *chtoby* ('in order'). In sum: the DI-construction can only express possibility in those contexts where there is some kind of blocking (associated with negation), or in those cases where there is some kind of unblocking (associated with the undoing of negation). Furthermore, the possibility interpretation only occurs in those contexts where an intention can be ascribed to the dative subject, whereas a necessitive interpretation only occurs in those cases where the intention of the dative subject is not taken into account.

As I mentioned, the DI-construction can also occur with the particle *by*, which expresses irrealty or a 'negative epistemic stance' (for this term, see Sweetser, 1996). Such cases can have the character of advice or wish, e.g.:

(115) **Otdoxnut'** by **bratu**. (Mets, 1985: 358)  
rest-INF IRR brother-DAT  
'Our brother should rest.'

(116) **Otdoxnut'** by **tebe!** (ibid.)  
rest-INF IRR you-DAT  
'You should rest.'

Prototypically, in such sentences the speaker (Sp) can be seen as the external force. For cases like these a representation as in Figure 4.9 can be given.

Figure 4.9



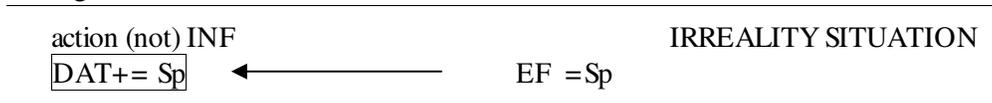
The situation described here has the following logic. If some agent is the recipient of an action in a irrealty situation, this implies that the agent is not performing the action in the present situation, and that the speaker takes into consideration that the hypothetical situation will not happen anyhow in the future. Sentences with *by* like these are closely related to cases that express necessity because in these sentences the speaker can be seen as an external force. Since the speaker is the source of information and perspective, the situation is presented from the point of view of the external force.

In some sentences, however, the speaker may identify with the dative subject and ascribe an intention to realize the action to the subject. Sentences like these share properties with sentences that express possibility, because in these sentences it is expressed that an agent wishes to fulfill an action, but the realization of this action is blocked, e.g.:

- (117) Otdoxnut' by mne (ibid.)  
rest-INF IRR I-DAT  
'If only I could rest.'

Such cases could be represented as in Figure 4.10.

Figure 4.10



It must be stressed, however, that in most cases both interpretations are possible, and that no discrete borders can be drawn between the different interpretations.

In the following section, where I will discuss my classification of the DI-construction, I will say more about the way in which the construction can be interpreted and whether different uses can be distinguished.

#### 4.8 Usage types and classification of the DI-construction

In the preceding section I discussed how the different modal interpretations of the construction can come about. In this section I will discuss how these uses can be classified. I will briefly discuss the different criteria of classification, and finally present the classification that I will use.

The classification of the DI-construction into usage types can be based on the following three interrelated criteria:

- (i) Semantic-functional criteria
- (ii) Formal-contextual criteria
- (iii) Criteria based on some system of interpretation of the meaning frame

Most classifications of the DI-construction (e.g. Timofeev, 1950; Bricyn, 1990; Maurice, 1996) are primarily based on the different functions or semantics that can be ascribed to the different uses. These are different so-called modal functions like 'necessity', 'predetermination', 'impossibility', 'wish', etc. Although a classification of the construction into such semantic types mirrors observed semantics, there are a number of problems connected with such a classification of the DI-construction:

- (i) The status of the semantic criteria is not always clear.
- (ii) Many instances of the construction do not fall under the proposed semantic descriptions.

Semantic criteria can be based on either language-independent definitions of modal notions, or language-dependent strategies, viz. classifications according to oppositional forms. An example of the use of language-independent definitions is given by Maurice (1995, 1996), who uses definitions from the logical tradition in her analysis of the DI-construction. Semantic criteria can also be based on the possibility of paraphrase, either with other forms from Russian, or from other languages. Both Bricyn (1990) and Maurice (1996) mention the possibility of paraphrase with other forms in Russian, such as the modal forms *nel'zja, možno, (ne) moč', ne udat'sja, (ne) nado, nužno, predstoit*, and future tense forms (perfective present, future tense with *byt'*). Maurice (1995) further refers to the possibility of paraphrasing the DI-construction in other languages (German and English).

Although a classification based on semantic criteria as discussed above may give insight into perceived semantic-functional differences, it must be stressed that it is not always clear what the status of such differences is. A classification based on oppositional forms may impose the parameters of the oppositional forms on the construction, whereas for the meaning structure of the construction itself these parameters may be irrelevant. To give an example, in Russian there are different forms that express necessity, for example *nado, nužno, dolžen, prihoditsja* etc. The differences between these forms are connected with, among others things, the type of obligation (cf. Shatunovskij, 1996). For the language user these differences in the type of necessity are important, because they correspond to different forms. However, the fact that the DI-construction can be paraphrased with these different forms does not imply that the parameters that define the differences between the modal forms are also relevant for the DI-construction; in this case the different 'semantic' features are not connected to different forms.

A second problem with a classification based on semantic criteria is that many instances of the DI-construction cannot be classified as clear examples of either

(im)possibility or (un)necessity, and it is often difficult to tell whether a particular case must be seen as a case of (un)necessity or (im)possibility. Consider the following sentence:

- (118) Xotel by ja d golymi rukami/ Okno d tjuremnoe vzloamat'/ Da zhal' bratishechki ja skovan kandalami/ **Mne** vse ravno **ne ubezhat'**.<sup>60</sup> (Song text)  
 (...) I-DAT anyway not escape-INF-PERF  
 'I would like to break the prison windows with my bare hands, but alas, my brothers, I am chained. I *can't* escape anyway.'  
 'I would like to break the prison windows with my bare hands, but alas, my brothers, I am chained. I *won't* escape anyway.'

This sentence could in principle be classified both as case of epistemic necessity and as a case of impossibility. The fusion between sentences that express impossibility and sentences that express negative epistemic necessity can be explained with the models of modality discussed above and the meaning of the DI-construction.

Extensionally speaking, the situation where an action will necessarily not occur can be identified with a situation where it is impossible that an action will occur. Intensionally speaking, however, these situations differ. In the case of possibility an intention can be ascribed to the subject to realize the infinitive action, whereas in the case of necessity, the intention of the subject is not considered. In most cases the aspect of the infinitive in the construction directs the specific interpretation. In the case of the perfective aspect, we can ascribe an intention to the dative subject to realize the action. In the case of the imperfective aspect, we do not focus on the possible completion of the action, and do not ascribe an intention to the dative subject to realize the action. In all cases, however, the dative subject can be seen as a *recipient* of some action. This means that in *all* cases some situation is *imposed* on the dative subject. This idea of imposing is closely related to the necessitive situation, but cannot be identified with it. It explains, however, why all sentences that express impossibility have an ontic flavor. As I will discuss below, this ontic flavor is especially strong in those cases where forms like *vse ravno ne*, or *nikogda ne* occur.

The same 'fusion' between modal types also occurs in some sentences without negation:

---

<sup>60</sup> <http://math.ucsd.edu/~broido/lyr/D3/D3.21.lat.html>

- (119) **Ètim rebjatam ezdit'**/ Oni po prirode ezdovye/ / A ej/ ona nikogda ne smozhet sama sest' za rul'. (Bricyn, 1990: 225)  
these-DAT boys-DAT drive-INF-IMPERF/ they by nature fit.to.drive/ / but she-DAT/ she never not will.can herself sit-INF-IMPERF behind wheel.  
'These boys *will* drive/ They are drivers by nature/ / But she/ she will never be able to sit behind the wheel.'  
'These boys *can* drive/ They are drivers by nature/ / But she/ she will never be able to sit behind the wheel.'

This sentence is classified by Bricyn (1990: 225) as a case of 'predestination', in my terms 'epistemic-ontic necessity', whereas Mets (1985: 205) classifies such sentences as cases of possibility.<sup>61</sup> The question as to which classification applies is connected with the question of whether one considers this to be a case of imposing, or a case of deblocking. As I will argue in 4.10.2, such sentences can be seen as cases of deblocking. This deblocking, however, is always connected to the idea of recipienthood, and as such to the idea of 'imposing'.

The discussion of the phenomena here suggests that a division into notions such as 'necessity', 'possibility', 'deontic necessity', 'epistemic necessity', etc. must be seen as model theoretic idealizations of the semantics of the construction. As such, a classification according to these parameters does not adequately capture the meaning of the construction.

Because of the problems discussed above, classifications based on semantic criteria can be backed up with classifications that are based on *context types*. Context types are constituted by collections of formal features that correspond to clear examples of different semantic types. Context types can be seen as idealized models. This means that instances of the DI-construction can share more or fewer features with context types.

Because particular semantic types such as 'necessity' or 'impossibility' prototypically occur with particular formal features, context types for such semantic types can be given. Features that constitute such context types may be the aspect of the verb, the presence or absence of negation, the presence or absence of conjunctions, adverbs and particles, the word order and information structure of the sentence, the presence or absence of question markers, the presence or absence of a dative, etc. In some cases non-formal features constitute context types, for example the Aktionsart of the verb.

There are two main types of non-interrogative DI-constructions without *by*, viz., (i) sentences with an imperfective infinitive, with or without negation, expressing different

---

<sup>61</sup> Note that in the last sentence of the extract an explicit modal verb is chosen, viz. *smoch'* ('can').

shades of necessity, and (ii) sentences with negation and a perfective infinitive expressing different shades of impossibility. Sentences without negation and a perfective infinitive occur in special contexts only, and can be interpreted as special cases of necessity, possibility, or similar notions. Because of the perceived relation between types based on semantic criteria, and specific formal features, these (collections of) formal features can be said to constitute context types. This does not mean, however, that a classification based solely on formal features mirrors classifications based solely on semantic features. Because of the multi-interpretability of phenomena such as imperfective and perfective aspect, this is not the case. As such, a classification based solely on aspect will not adequately capture some perceived semantic similarities and differences. Classifications of the DI-construction must therefore take both semantic and formal criteria into account.

A possible third way to classify and categorize the different uses of the DI-construction would be to point at some system or structure behind the different interpretations. Such a system could be based on the systematic possibilities of the interpretation of some abstract meaning, corresponding to different semantic and contextual types. In the case of the DI-construction a system of interpretations could for example be based on the following parameters:

- (i) The question of whether the dative subject is the recipient of the action in this world, in a hypothetical world (in the case of *esli*, *chtoby*, and *pered tem*), or in a irrealty world (cases with *by*).
- (ii) The question of whether the dative subject is the recipient of negated or non-negated action.
- (iii) The question of whether an intention can be ascribed to the dative participant to realize the infinitive action (roughly corresponding to aspectual choice).
- (iv) The question of whether the DI-construction functions as a question or not.
- (v) The nature of the external force or the dative participant (for example, is the external force the speaker or some other entity? can the external force be identified with fate, or with some script, norm, or contextually given force?).

Needless to say, classifications of the DI-construction must be seen as idealizations of the linguist, because the DI-construction cannot be seen as neatly falling into different usage types. Usage types can, however, be seen as systematizations of and behind the linguistic system, and, as such, give insight into the different ways in which the construction may be used. In some cases usage types may perhaps also constitute

### *Meaning and interpretation of the DI-construction*

relevant types for the processing and parsing of language. I think that in order for an instance of the abstract DI-construction to be an instance of such a ‘subconstruction’ of the DI-construction, it must satisfy two conditions, viz. (i) it must have a well-defined formal structure that is distinguishable from other instances of the DI-construction, and (ii) this structure must correspond to a well-defined and distinguishable linguistic function. A well-defined and distinguishable function presupposes that the function of the construction is not too abstract, and not too specified.<sup>62</sup> Since psycholinguistic research would be needed to answer such questions adequately, I will not go into this theme here.

In my discussion of the DI-construction, I will mainly follow the classifications that are proposed in the literature mentioned above (cf. Bricyn, 1990; Maurice, 1996). I think these classifications can be justified because of the perceived differences in use of the construction, which can be sustained by different oppositional forms, the existence of context types, and the system behind these cases. The following types can be distinguished:

#### *Uses of the DI-construction*

- Uses with prototypically the imperfective aspect that express notions like deontic-necessity
- Uses with prototypically the imperfective aspect that express notions like epistemic-necessity
- Uses with the imperfective aspect and the particle *zhe* that express notions in-between necessity and impossibility
- Uses with the imperfective aspect that express the idea of ‘being capable of’
- Uses with prototypically the perfective aspect and negation that express notions like impossibility
- Uses with prototypically the perfective aspect and special context of deblocking that express notions like possibility
- Uses that occur with subordinators *esli*, *pered tem kak*, and *chtoby*
- Optative use without *by* (with VS order)
- Uses with *by*
- Directive use
- Interrogatives without interrogative pronoun/ adverb

---

<sup>62</sup> In fact, I do not think that it makes sense to speak of ‘functions’ in the case of highly abstract or specified notions. Functions are by definition not too abstract or too specified.

*Related constructions*

- Uses with verbs of motions and quantificational modifier
- Existential construction
- DI-construction as specifications of nouns
- Instances of the second dative

There are three important things that have to be mentioned about this classification, viz. (i) the classification is a cross-classification, because some uses are classified twice (e.g. uses with *chto by* are classified as cases that express possibility, and are discussed separately), (ii) the classification is an idealization, because all uses share the same semantics, and in many cases no strict borders can be drawn between different uses, and (iii) the classification of the DI-construction into ‘necessity’ and ‘possibility’ etc. is only an idealization, because these terms do not convey the actual meaning of the construction. Nevertheless, the classification partly conveys perceived differences between different uses, and partly aims to give an insightful overview and explanation of the different uses.

My main aim in the linguistic analysis of the DI-construction is to show how the language user interprets a particular use of the construction. This means that the linguistic analysis must reconstruct how the language user employs the semantic information from the construction to arrive at his interpretation. In the following sections I will give a *reconstruction* of the interpretations of the construction.

#### 4.9 Necessity and absence of necessity: Cases of imposing

In this section I will discuss uses of the DI-construction that can be seen as cases of necessity. Uses that express necessity can be visually represented as in Figure 4.11.

Figure 4.11\*



\* INF = situation expressed by the infinitive; DAT= the participant expressed by the dative noun, EF=external force

*Meaning and interpretation of the DI-construction*

In the case of the necessitive interpretation of the DI-construction, the dative participant is not the initiator of the situation but only a *potential agent* because there is some external force that *compels* the participant expressed in the dative to realize the infinitive situation. Such an interpretation occurs if no intention is, or can be ascribed to the dative subject to realize the infinitive situation, and the infinitive situation can be interpreted as the result of a force. The following prototypical context can be given for such cases:

**DAT (+byt'<sub>neuter</sub>) + (ne) + INF<sub>imperf</sub> + [presupposition: initiation of the (non)realization of the infinitive situation can be ascribed to another force than the dative participant] → The dative participant has a necessity to do the infinitive situation, or in the case of negation, no necessity to do the infinitive situation.**

This must be seen as a *prototypical* context because in some cases one can speak of an necessitive interpretation of the DI-construction, while the infinitive verb is perfective.

Two main necessitive uses of the DI-construction can be distinguished: (i) uses that have a *deontic-ontic* character, and (ii) uses that have an *epistemic-ontic* character. I will speak of 'deontic-ontic necessity' if the external force can be identified with a force like a person, institution, norm, or script that compels the agent to do the action. In this term, *deontic* refers to the force (person, norm, or script), whereas the term *ontic* refers to the idea of 'the way things *are* or *go*'. I will speak of 'epistemic-ontic' necessity if the force can be identified with something like 'fate', 'the inevitable way things go'; or 'some observable pattern in reality'; in these sentences it is expressed that the situation will *necessarily* be the case because of fate or the way things go. In this term, *ontic* refers to the idea of 'the way things *are*', whereas the term *epistemic* refers to the idea that *knowledge* of the way things are can be seen as evidence leading to the conclusion that the situation will necessarily be the case. Below examples of both types of necessity are given:

*Deontic-ontic*

- (120) Mne zhe vecherom vse ravno **idti** v biblioteku; kakaja tut rabota! (Bricyn, 1990: 208)  
I-DAT PRT evening anyway go-INF-IMPERF to library; what here work!  
'I have to go to the library this evening anyway; how could one work here!'

*Epistemic-ontic*

- (121) **Byt'** sil'nomu dozhdju.  
be-INF strong-DAT rain-DAT

'There will be heavy rain.'

(De)ontic infinitive sentences can be paraphrased in Russian with modal predicates of necessity, *nado*, *dolzhen* ('must') and in some contexts with *nuzhno* ('need') or the future tense. Epistemic-ontic infinitive sentences can be paraphrased with future tense (*budet*) and in some context with *dolzhen byt'* ('must be') and *predstojat* ('be due for', 'await').

It must be noted that in many cases it is not possible to make a distinction between (de)ontic cases and ontic cases with an epistemic character. This underlines that the classification into such types must to some extent be seen as an overspecification by the linguist.

As discussed, there are two different interpretations of necessity of the DI-construction. How do we account for them? In other words, how can the DI-construction be interpreted such that it expresses (de)ontic necessity and epistemic-ontic necessity? In the theoretical linguistic literature, it is often assumed that epistemic modality must be seen as an extension or later historical and psychological development of deontic necessity (e.g. Sweetser, 1990). In such analyses, deontic necessity is seen as more 'basic' than epistemic necessity. The hypothesis that deontic necessity is more basic than epistemic necessity seems to imply that an epistemic interpretation of the DI-construction can only be motivated by means of the deontic interpretation of the construction, and not the other way around. Such a hypothesis cannot be sustained for the DI-construction. It is therefore more appropriate to say that the meaning of the construction can be *interpreted* either as a case of deontic-ontic necessity or as a case of epistemic-ontic necessity, depending on the context in which it occurs. The interpretative status of these uses is underlined by the occurrence of borderline cases.<sup>63</sup>

Some remarks have to be made about the status of the DI-construction as a means to express necessity. Maurice (1996: 306–308) remarks that the use of the DI-construction to express necessity is more marginal now than it was in the past; she suggests that the decline of this use is connected with the preference of language users for a more explicit way to express necessity, like such as modal forms like *nado*, *nuzhno*, and *dolzhen*. I think that Maurice's observation is correct, but it must be added that the DI-construction may still be preferred in particular contexts, and with particular verbs. I suspect that the DI-construction is still a neutral way to express necessity in the case of so-called 'script-

---

<sup>63</sup> Note furthermore that in older stages of Russian the DI-construction could be used in some contexts where in modern Russian a modal predicate expression of deontic necessity is preferred. (See Nikiforov, 1952). It may be that there is a diachronic tendency to use the DI-construction for epistemic-ontic cases, and not for deontic-ontic cases.

necessity'; in the case of sentences where the subject is emphasized, and generally in sentences where the speaker emphasizes that the necessity is the result of the appropriate way things go and are; typical of such contexts is the use of particles such as *ved'* and *z'be*. Furthermore, the DI-construction is an implicit way to express modality; in some cases such an implicit way may be preferred, especially in interrogative sentences, where paraphrase with a modal form is sometimes unacceptable (see Maurice, 1995: 190), or where the DI-construction can be chosen to keep the modality in question underspecified. In the following sections I will discuss the (de)ontic necessitive use of the infinitive construction in affirmative and negative sentences, and then discuss the epistemic-ontic necessitive use of the DI-construction.

#### 4.9.1 Deontic-ontic necessity

The following sentences are examples of what I call '(de)ontic' necessitive uses of the DI-construction:

- (122) Poedem? Èvka budet rada. – **Mne** zavtra v Ameriku **letet'**, – govorju. – Ne vyspljus'. (V. Erofeev, *Gomnososka*)  
shall.we.go? Èvka will.be happy. – I-DAT tomorrow to America fly-INF-IMPERF, I.say  
– not I.sleep  
'Shall we go? Èvka will be happy to see you. "I have to fly to America tomorrow", I said.  
"I will have to get up early."'
- (123) Pojdem bystree, **mne** cherez pjat' minut **vyezhat'**.<sup>64</sup> (V. Pelevin, *Princ Gosplana*)  
let's.go faster, I-DAT in five minutes go.away-INF-IMPERF  
'Let's go faster, I have to go in five minutes.'
- (124) A ved' zavtra **mne** **vstavat'** rano/ Potomu chto **mne** k tomu parnju/ Na zacet **idti** opjat', mama.<sup>65</sup> (A. Babij, *Untitled poem*)  
but PRT tomorrow I-DAT get.up-INF-IMPERF early/ because I-DAT to that guy/ on test go-INF-IMPERF again, mama  
'But tomorrow I have to get up early/ Since with that guy/ I have to do a test again, mama.'

---

<sup>64</sup> <http://moshkow.donetsk.ua/lat/PELEWIN/prince.txt>

<sup>65</sup> [http://www-trn.alex.krsk.ru/197\\_/1972/1972\\_08.htm](http://www-trn.alex.krsk.ru/197_/1972/1972_08.htm)

- (125) A **nam** eshche **merit'** versty, I zhit' nam, i veselo pet' ... .<sup>66</sup> (Songtext, L.Sergeev, *Tolstye*)  
but we-DAT still measure-INF-IMPERF versts, and live-INF-IMPERF we-DAT, and happy sing ...  
'But we still have to measure the miles, and live, and sing happily.'
- (126) **Mne exat'**, a **tebe ostavat'sja**. (Mets, 1985: 206)  
I-DAT go-INF-IMPERF, but you-DAT stay-INF-IMPERF  
'I have to go, but you have to stay.'
- (127) A ty, ty chto sdelať? Vot otskrebut sejchas sanitary kishki tvoi ot asfal'ta – vot i vse tvoi dela. A **nam rabotat'** i **rabotat'**, celuju maxinu vorochat', potomu chto vse, chego my poka dobilis', èto tol'ko nachalo, èto vse eshche nuzhno soxranit', milyj moj, a soxranivshi – priumnozhit' ... .<sup>67</sup> (A. & B. Strugackie, *Grad Obrechennyj*)  
(...). but we-DAT work-INF-IMPERF and work-INF-IMPERF, (...)  
'But you, what have you done? Well the hospital attendants will have to scrape you off the asphalt, that's what will happen to you. But *we have to work and work*, deal with a large number of things, because everything that we have achieved until now, that is just the beginning, and we have to keep all that, my dear, and what we keep we have to increase.'
- (128) Tol'ko i guljat' segodnja, a **tebe sidet'** tut do temnoty.<sup>68</sup> (R. Gusejnov, *Ibo prez'bnnee prashlo*)  
only and walk-INF-IMPERF today, but you-DAT sit-INF-IMPERF here till darkness  
'It would be nice to go out for a walk today, but of course that's not possible, one has to stay here till it gets dark.'
- (129) Ne **tebe sudit'**<sup>69</sup> (E. Shvarc, *Obyknovennoe chudo*)  
not you-DAT judge-INF-IMPERF!  
'It is not up to you to judge!'
- (130) Ty, Sultan Abramych, krugom neprav. Potomu chto ne **tebe govorit'** o gitlerjugende, fashizme-nacizme, Gitlere.<sup>70</sup>  
you, Sultan Abramych, all over wrong, because not you-DAT speak-INF-IMPERF about Hitlerjugend, fascism-nazism, Hitler

---

<sup>66</sup> <http://lib.nordnet.ru/lat/KSP/sergeew.txt>

<sup>67</sup> [http://www.moshkow.pp.ru:5000/lat/STRUGACKIE/grad\\_obr.txt](http://www.moshkow.pp.ru:5000/lat/STRUGACKIE/grad_obr.txt)

<sup>68</sup> <http://lib.nordnet.ru/lat/ZHURNAL/rustam.txt>

<sup>69</sup> <http://www.moshkow.pp.ru:5000/lat/SHWARC/chudo.txt>

<sup>70</sup> <http://www.forum.msk.ru:8084/files/guestbook-po000124.html>

*Meaning and interpretation of the DI-construction*

'You, Sultan Abramych, are totally wrong. Because you have no right to talk about the Hitler youth, fascism-nazism and Hitler.'

- (131) Sud'ja dejstvitel'no zdes', i ètot sud'ja – ty. **Tebe sudit'**, xorosho li vyshlo. (Maurice, 1996: 122)  
judge really here, and that judge – you. You-DAT judge-INF-IMPERF, good part went  
'The judge is really here, and that judge is you. It is up to you to decide whether it went well or not.'

Different types of deontic-ontic use can be distinguished, although one should bear in mind that in many cases no strict borders can be drawn between different types; the different types are given below:

- Necessity based on personal plans with an ontic character (often *ved'*, *z'be*, *eshche*)
- Contrastive sentences
- Necessity based on generally accepted norms (often with contrastive accent) expressing 'the appropriate way things go or are'

In some sentences the necessity is linked to a personal plan (e.g. (122)–(125)). Relative to some individual plan, the infinitive action is conceived as necessitive; such cases prototypically occur with a first person. Because the infinitive action is linked to an individual plan, the infinitive action does not necessarily have to occur, as it does in the case of epistemic-ontic necessity; in the following sentence the infinitive action occurs on an 'ideal' level only:

- (132) **Mne eshche konja poit'**, no ja, pozhaluj, ètogo ne budu delat'. (Bricyn, 1990: 210)  
I-DAT still horse water-INF-IMPERF, but I probably that not will do  
'I still have to give water to the horse, but I probably won't do it.'

In many cases the necessity based on the individual plan is presented as the motivation for another situation; typical of such cases (e.g. (124)) is the expression of the particles *ved'* ('you know', 'after all') and *z'be* ('you see'). The particle *ved'* emphasizes the obviousness of a fact or truth contained in an utterance, whereas the particle *z'be* places categorical and insistent emphasis on the indisputability of a fact (Vasilyeva, 1972: 46–71). Another typical element is the particle *eshche* ('still') as in (125) and (132). This particle emphasizes that at the present time the infinitive situation has not yet been realized, but that according to some plan, the infinitive situation will still have to be realized. In all cases,

the *ontic* character of the deontic necessity is underlined, because the speaker expresses that according to the planned way things are the infinitive situation will be the case.

In other cases the deontic-ontic use of the DI-construction occurs in sentences where the necessity to do the action is contrasted with another situation, as in (126)–(128). In such sentences the speaker may express his discontent with the necessity to realize the infinitive situation.

The deontic-ontic interpretation furthermore occurs in sentences where the realization of the infinitive situation is presented as an appropriate action, based on some generally accepted norm or script (cf. Maurice, 1995, 1996; for the term ‘script’). This reading is typical of sentences with partial negation, as in (129)–(130). Sentences like these can often be paraphrased in English with ‘it’s up to x to do Y’.

What the contexts given above have in common is that the idea that the participant expressed in the dative is the recipient of the infinitive situation is emphasized, either by implicitly negating the opposite situation (by partial negation), by emphasizing the obviousness of the recipienthood of the dative participant (expressed by *ved’* or *zhe*), by focusing on the fact that the situation is still to happen (expressed by *eshche*), or by contrasting the recipienthood of the participant of the infinitive situation with some other situation. In all cases one can speak of what I will call ‘epistemic imposing’. In my opinion these contexts show that the deontic-ontic interpretation has a basic *ontic* nature, expressing ‘the way things are and go’. This specific ontic character is absent in the case of oppositional forms such as *nado*, *nuzhno*, *dolzhen*, *sledovat’*, and *prihodit’sja*. A further difference between the use of the DI-construction under discussion and the oppositional forms *nado* and *nuzhno*, and *sledovat’* is that in the case of the predicative adverbs, and the verb *sledovat’*, the dative subject may remain unspecified, and can be interpreted as a generic agent:

- (133) Est’ tverdo prinjatyj teatrovedcheskij postulat – chto proizvedenie sleduet sudit’ ne po namerenijam avtora, a po rezul’tatu.<sup>71</sup> (*Theatre journal*)  
exists strong accepted teatrologistic postulate – that work must judge not according intention of.author, but according result  
‘There is a well accepted teatrologistic postulate – that one has to judge a literary work on the basis of the way it is played, and not on the basis of the way the author intended it to be.’

---

<sup>71</sup> <http://www.theatre.ru:8084/ptzh/2000/20/094.html>

Such an interpretation is not possible for the use of the DI-construction under discussion; in this case there is always some emphasis on the recipienthood of the dative participant.

Below, I will give a further description of the meaning of the DI-construction in the case of the deontic-ontic use. First, the abstract meaning is given, followed by the relevant semantic-syntactic features for the deontic interpretation, and finally I described how these features interact with the abstract meaning. Note that, in contrast to the description of the Russian imperative in Chapter III, I do not present the different uses of the construction in terms of semantic extensions or transfers, but as interpretations of the different constituents making up the construction, or as different interpretations of the abstract meaning of the construction (cf. Figure 4.12).

Figure 4.12

---

**The dative participant x is the recipient of a situation type Y, i.e. x does not initiate Y himself**

*Semantic-syntactic features*

- (i) Y is prototypically imperfective.
- (ii) Participant x is animate.
- (iii) If x is not expressed it must be interpretable as the speaker or addressee
- (iv) Y can be interpreted as a (controllable) situation.
- (v) In the case of a personal plan reading, the action is placed in the context of a place/ time specification (*zavtra, eshche, sejchas*, etc.); in general the initial information state that the infinitive situation is not already the case must be emphasized (favored by *ved', zhe, eshche*, contrastive context, contrast accent, etc.).
- (vi) The auxiliary *bylo* can be expressed, but is restricted to specific contexts; the expression of *budet* is unacceptable.
- (vii) Prototypically [dative infinitive] order.
- (viii) The infinitive can be negated.
- (ix) The infinitive can occur in interrogative sentences.

*Interpretation*

Because no intention is ascribed to x to realize situation Y, and the situation can be controlled by the animate subject x, the reason that the action Y is not initiated by x is that there is some other force that compels x to do Y:

The participant (expressed in the dative form) is the recipient of an action type assigned to him by some force, i.e. according to some ‘script’, or ‘plan’ the agent has no choice but to do the infinitive action; or in the case of negation, the agent does not have to do the infinitive action.

It is typical of the deontic-ontic use of the DI-construction, that the recipienthood of the dative participant is stressed; this means that there is always an implicit negation of an alternative situation (typically expressed by *ved’*, *zhe*, or contrastive accent).

---

Below I will discuss in more detail the semantic-syntactic features as they are given in Figure 4.12.

(i) Aspect

Ontic-deontic necessitive infinitives mostly have the imperfective aspect. The explanation for the imperfective aspect is that the first thing that comes to mind if an action is imposed on an agent, is the occurrence of the action as such, and not the *possible* completion of the action. By using the imperfective aspect, the focus is not on the possible intention of the dative subject to complete the action, but on the fact that some action is imposed, and that the force compels the subject to *engage* in the action.

In some specific usage types the (de)ontic necessitive interpretation also occurs with perfective verbs. The following usage types with a (de)ontic necessitive interpretation and a perfective infinitive can be distinguished:

- (a) Possibly in sentences with the particle *eshche* (‘still’), or sentences without *eshche*, that can be interpreted as cases with *eshche* (see Maurice, 1996: 119, 120, 142)
- (b) Sentences with a restrictive necessitive character
- (c) Sentences where the necessity has the character of a ‘need’ (*Russkaja Grammatika*, 1980, II)
- (d) Sentences where the necessity has the character of ‘a wish directed at the speaker’

I will briefly discuss these cases below.

Maurice (1996: 119) claims that the perfective aspect can be used in sentences with the particle *eshche* (‘still’) in order to emphasize that the result of the action is wished, e.g.:

- (134) Mne *eshche reshit’* zadachu. (Maurice, 1996: 119)

I-DAT still solve-INF-PERF problem  
'I still have to solve one problem.'

Maurice (1996: 120, 142) further argues that most speakers of Russian do not accept sentences with a perfective aspect and *esbche*. Since I have not seen actually attested cases of such expressions, and the possibility of these cases is rather hypothetical, I will not analyze them further.<sup>72</sup>

A perfective aspect occurs in the following sentences with the restrictive particle *tol'ko*:

- (135) Da ved' emu tol'ko glazom **mignut'**, on takim by psom obzavelsja, chto axnut'. (M. Bulgakov, *Sobach'e serdce*).  
PRT after.all he-DAT only with.eye wink-INF-PERF, he such IRR dog acquire, that gasp-INF-PERF  
'He only has to wink, and he would have a dog that makes you gasp.'
- (136) **Mne** tol'ko na minutku **zabezhat'** v kontoru. (Maurice, 1990: 120/ L.Tolstoj)  
I-DAT just for a minute run-INF-PERF in office  
'I just have to go into the office for a second.'

The first sentence has a conditional character. It expresses that for situation Y to occur, it is only necessary to realize the situation expressed by the infinitive. The restrictive character is connected with the semelfactive character of the verb in combination with the meaning of *tol'ko* ('just') + *glazom*. In this case, using the imperfective aspect (*migat'*) would not convey that the dative subject has to do only a very small action for another situation to occur. The conditional character is absent in (136). In this sentence the occurrence of the perfective can be motivated in the same way. It is expressed that the dative participant just has to realize a small thing, with the suggestion that after this he can do another action.

Another sentence type where the perfective aspect occurs is constituted by sentences that express some need to do the action expressed by the infinitive. The *Russkaja Grammatika* (1980, II: 374) gives the following two examples:

---

<sup>72</sup> I find it difficult to analyze the expressions under discussion, since I have not seen attested cases. The only attested case given by Maurice (1996: 120) is (136), where *esbche* does *not* occur. I will, however, analyze this sentence differently, viz. as a case of restricted necessity.

- (137) Vy zachem prishli? – **Mne pogovorit'** s uchitelem. (*Russkaja Grammatika*, 1980, II: 374)  
 you why came? – I-DAT speak-INF-PERF with teacher  
 'Why have you come? I need to speak to the teacher.'
- (138) V priemnoj mnogo posetitelej: **odnomu podpisat'** spravku, **drugomu podat'** zhalobu, **tret'emu – uvidet'** predsedatelja. (ibid.)  
 in waiting.room many visitors: one-DAT sign-INF-PERF note, other-DAT file-INF-PERF complaint, third-DAT see-INF-PERF chairman  
 'In the waiting room are a lot of visitors: the first needs something to be signed, the other needs to file a complaint, and the third needs to see the chairman.'

Sentences like these can be paraphrased with *nuzhno* ('need') or *xotet'* ('want'). The perfective aspect indicates the relevance of reaching the telos of the action from the perspective of the dative participant. The occurrence of the dative shows that the action is not conceptualized as the result of the will of the agent, but that an internal disposition or urge compels the subject to do the action. It must be remarked that such cases only seem to occur in very specific contexts, namely where the presence of the dative participant is directed at the realization of the infinitive action, and is *motivated* by the need to realize the infinitive action. I suspect that the perfective aspect is sustained by this particular context of motivation. In those cases where a motivation has to be given for the presence of the subject in terms of 'goal specification' the emphasis on the need to realize the action leads to a better motivation. Note that the interpretation of the infinitive as 'goal specification' also occurs in cases without dative subject, such as in the following sentence:

- (139) I zachem vy tol'ko prishli bratec? (...) – **Posmotret'** na vidy kontrrevoljucii, bratec, – otvetil Ozhogov. (B. Pil'njak, *Volga vpadaet v Kaspijskoe more*)  
 and why you just came brother? (...) – see-INF-PERF on sight of.counter-revolution, brother, – answered Ozhogov.  
 And why did you come, brother? (...) "To look what is going on with the counter-revolution", answered Ozhogov.'

In this sentence the idea of goal specification is expressed without the idea of need.

The perfective aspect also occurs in the case of sentences where the speaker 'directs' himself to do an action (and where the dative is emphasized):

- (140) **Poexat' i mne, uznat', chto tam takoe, – skazal Dubov.**<sup>73</sup> (*Russkaja Grammatika*, 1980, II: 374/ A. Fadeev)  
go-INF-PERF and I-DAT get.to.know-INF-PERF, what there such, – said Dubov  
'I'd better go myself too, to find out what is going on there, said Dubov.'

The occurrence of the perfective aspect can be motivated by the fact that the speaker wishes the realization of the infinitive situation in the immediate speech context.

(ii-iv) Nature of the dative participant and the infinitive action

In order to interpret the DI-construction as referring to a scene where a force compels the agent to do something, it is necessary that there is an agent expressed by the dative subject, which is conceptualized as an entity that could, under the influence of a force, do the infinitive action. This means that the infinitive subject must be associated with the dative participant, that the agent must be animate, and that the action expressed by the verb must be understood as controllable by the agent. As I will explain below, the epistemic-ontic interpretation occurs if these conditions are not met, especially when the agent is non-animate and when the infinitive situation can be interpreted as a state, instead of an action.

In some cases no dative subject is expressed; in such sentences the agent may be interpreted as the speaker ('I'), or the addressee present in the speech situation ('you'):

- (141) Nu/ govoril s nim/ / I chto/ / V subbotu snova **dezhurit'**. (Bricyn, 1990: 209)  
well/ spoke to him/ / and what/ / on saturdays again be.on.duty-INF-IMPERF  
'Well, I spoke to him, and do you know what, I have to be on duty Saturday again.'
- (142) Da uljazhesh'sja ty nakonec!/ / Rano zhe **vstavat'**. (Bricyn, 1990: 209)  
PRT will.lay down you at.last/ early PRT get.up-INF-IMPERF  
'Are you lying down at last! / You should get up early.'

In these sentences the subject can be inferred from the context, and in principle inserted.<sup>74</sup> Cases without dative participant can also be interpreted as directive cases, expressing that the speaker wants the addressee to realize the infinitive action, e.g.:

---

<sup>73</sup> The *Russkaja Grammatika* (1980) does not place *uznat'* between commas, but in A. Fadeev, *Razgrom* (1969: 140) these commas are given.

<sup>74</sup> In the following sentence the potential agent can be identified with a non-specified group of people ('they'): *Oni uzbe s trassy osnovnoj svernuli, po karte spravljajutsja, exat' nedolgo, skoro èto samoe tatarskoe pole vphyvet*,

- (143) **Vstavat'!**  
 get.up-INF-IMPERF  
 'Get up!'

Such sentences can also occur with the perfective aspect, stressing the wish of the speaker to realize the action; in such sentences the second person addressee may be formally expressed, but in most cases it is inferred from the context. I will discuss directive sentences in 4.14.

If the infinitive is perfective, impersonal sentences (that is sentences without a dative participant) can also be interpreted as expressing direction to non-specified people ('people', 'they'):

- (144) **Zarezat'** takogo starika ko vsem svin'jam! (I. Babel': 231)  
 kill-INF-PERF such a old man to all pigs  
 'They should kill the old man like a pig/ Let them kill the old man like a pig.'

Such sentences cannot strictly be seen as cases of the DI-construction, since the dative participant cannot be expressed ((*im*\*) **zarezat'** takogo starika ko vsem svin'jam). A similar case is the following sentence, where the identity of the infinitive subject may also be associated with the speaker himself:

- (145) Nichego v nix osobennogo, pusten'kie devicy. **Zabyt'** pro nix. (*Russkaja Grammatika*, 1980, II: 372/ Trif.)  
 nothing in them special, empty girls. forget-INF-PERF about them  
 'There is nothing special about them, they are superficial girls. One should forget about them/ Let me forget about them.'

This sentence shows similarities to the construction with *luchshe* ('better'), where the speaker states that it is better to do the infinitive action (*Mne luchshe zabyt' pro nix*). Both (144) and (145) can be seen as infinitive sentences that share features with sentences where the infinitive clause is a complement; such cases lean heavily on the context in

---

*nedolgo so mnoju muchit'sja, moi kaprizy snosit'*. (V. Erofeev, *Russkaja Krasavica*); (they already from road main left, on map look, go not.long, soon that same Tartar field appears, not.long with me suffer-INF-IMPERF, my whim bear-INF-IMPERF; 'They already left the main road, and look at the map, it won't be long before the Mongol-field will appear, they won't have to suffer from me anymore, and bear my whims'). Sentences with *dolgo* have a different structure than regular cases and are discussed in 4.16.1.

which they occur (see 4.4.3). A non-directive reading of impersonal sentences occurs in the case of sentences with *tol'ko* ('only') that express reduced negation:

- (146) Gosudar', ponimaesh', manifest podpisal, chtoby vse perevernut' po-novomu, nikomu ne obizhat', muzhikam zemlju i vsej sravnjat' s dvorjanami. Podpisannyj ukaz, ty chto dumaesh', tol'ko **obnarodovat'**. (B. Pasternak, *Doktor Zivago*)  
(...). signed decree, what you think, only proclaim-INF-(IM)PERF  
'The ruler, you know, signed a decree, to change everything completely, to insult no-one, to give the farmers land so that they have as much as the noblemen. The signed decree, just imagine, only has to be proclaimed.'

This sentence has a deontic character, expressing that the only action that is to be realized is the infinitive action; the infinitive subject is associated with a non-identified group of people ('they').

In all these sentences the necessity has a general character, since the non-expressed infinitive agent is not linked to a specific agent. These cases therefore lack the typical ontic character that can be ascribed to the combination of the dative and the infinitive. The non-generic status of the agent in the DI-construction also differs from the status of the agent in the case of the adverbial predicate of necessity *nado*. This adverb often occurs without a dative subject; in such cases the subject is interpreted as a generic subject (Shatunovskij, 1996: 241). In the case of *nado*, the generic interpretation is made possible by the fact that the modality is expressed by a form, whereas in the case of the DI-construction the necessitive interpretation occurs because the non-specified agent of an action type is unified with some agent expressed in the dative; the omitting of the dative leads to a different interpretation, viz. a directive interpretation, or, with *tol'ko*, to a deontic interpretation without the ontic nuance.

(v) Additional specifications

Bricyn (1990: 209, 215) remarks that most deontic necessitive interpretations of the DI-construction occur with a specification of space and time such as *tut* or *totčas*. The expression of a time specification is also noted by Mets (1985: 206), who claims that a DI-construction like the following is not interpretable without context:

- (147) ?Mne rabotat'.  
I-DAT work-INF-IMPERF

This is in contrast to sentences with a form expressing necessity, like the modal adverb *nuzhno* ('need'):

- (148) Mne nuzhno rabotat'.  
 I-DAT necessary work-INF-IMPERF  
 'I have to work.'

According to Mets, adding a form like *zavtra* ('tomorrow') makes sentence (147) interpretable (*Mne rabotat' zavtra*). Note that the time-space specification is not a necessary trait of the (de)ontic necessitive interpretation of the DI-construction, but only occurs in the case of a personal plan reading. Note furthermore that the specification of time is often absent in the case of the epistemic-ontic interpretation of the DI-construction; the epistemic-ontic interpretation typically occurs with states that cannot be linked to a particular moment in time (Bricyn, 1990: 227).

I think that the difference between the syntactic behavior of the DI-construction and modal predicates must be sought in the different syntactic-semantic status of these two expressions of modality. In the case of the DI-construction, the modality is indirectly expressed, that is, derived by composition, whereas in the case of forms like *nuzhno* or *nado*, the modal meaning is associated directly with the form. In the case of the deontic interpretation of the DI-construction, it is expressed that the dative participant is the recipient of some situation. This differs from the construction with *nado* or *nuzhno*, where the dative participant is the recipient of a *state*, viz. a state where some abstract agent is compelled to do something by some force; in those cases where a dative is expressed this abstract agent is associated with the dative participant.

In contrast to modal predicates like *nado* and *nuzhno*, the deontic use of the DI-construction has a typical 'ontic' character, that is, the construction expresses that according to some force (plan, script, norm) something is bound to happen, or due to happen. In many cases the ontic character of the deontic interpretation of the DI-construction is underlined by the use of particles like *ved'* ('after all'), which stress that the way things are supposed to be is such that the infinitive situation will be realized. In order to interpret this meaning as referring to a case where the speaker expresses that some deontic force compels the speaker to realize the action, it is necessary to place the action in time, prototypically by expressing a future-oriented time specification (*zavtra, eshche, totchas, tut*, etc.). Such a specification is absent in those cases where the emphasis is not on the fact that the action is due to happen, but is on the agent of the action, the action type, or other circumstances of the action.

(vi) Expression of *bylo budet*

Necessitive infinitives occur with the impersonally used copula *bylo* to locate the scene expressed by the infinitive predicate in a moment before the moment of speaking. In most cases *bylo* occurs before the infinitive, but *bylo* can also occur as a clitic to the infinitive (e.g. (152)). Insertion of *bylo* is acceptable in the case of partial negation, interrogatives, and with the verb *privykat'* (Maurice, 1996: 138, 225, 238):

- (149) On zhil po-svoemu, **ne mne bylo sudit'** ego; on shel svoej dorogoj.<sup>75</sup> (A. Nikitin, *Noch' begushchego psa*)  
he lived in.his.own.way, not I-DAT was-NEUT judge-INF-IMPERF him; he went his way  
'He lived in his own way, it wasn't up to me to judge him; he went his own way.'
- (150) V karmane ostalis' tol'ko prava i kljuchi ot mashiny. Chto **mne bylo delat'**? Prishlos' volej-nevolej pustit'sja v stranstvie za prezrennym metallom (...).<sup>76</sup> (M. Isaev, *Ozhiblenie*)  
(...) what I-DAT was-NEUT do-INF-IMPERF?  
'In my pocket only the driving license and the car keys were left. What should I do? Whether I liked it or not, I had to start my journey for that filthy lucre.'
- (151) Zadacha okazalas' ne iz legkix, no k podvigam **geroju bylo ne privykat'**.<sup>77</sup> (A. Smirnov, *Zerkaľnyj sbit*)  
task turned.out.to.be not from easiest, but to heroic.deeds hero-DAT was-NEUT not get.used-INF-IMPERF  
'The task was not one of the easiest ones, but our hero was accustomed to heroic deeds.'  
(lit. 'he didn't have to get used...')
- (152) **Artemu**, nemalo pobrodivshemu po raznym miram, **ne privykat' bylo** ko vsjakim chudesam, no zdes' on stolknulsja s sovershenno neob''jasnimym javleniem.<sup>78</sup> (Ju. Brajder & N. Chadovich, *Klinki Maksarov*)  
Artyom-DAT (...), not get.used-INF-IMPERF was-NEUT (...)  
'Artyom, who had been travelling a lot through different worlds, was accustomed to all of these miracles, but in this case he was confronted with an unexplicable phenomenon.'  
(lit. 'he didn't have to get used...')

---

<sup>75</sup> <http://www.litera.ru:8085/slova/nikitin/noch.html>

<sup>76</sup> <http://www.litera.ru:8085/slova/isaev/max1.htm>

<sup>77</sup> [http://www.litera.ru:8085/slova/ak\\_smirnov/zs.html](http://www.litera.ru:8085/slova/ak_smirnov/zs.html)

<sup>78</sup> <http://www.magister.msk.ru:8085/library/sf/bray&002.htm>

Maurice (1996: 138–140) states that in other contexts the expression of *bylo* is unacceptable.<sup>79</sup>

The restriction on the expression of *budet*, the future tense of *byt'*, is even stronger. I have attested no sentences with *budet* and a deontic-ontic interpretation. I suspect that the expression of *budet* in the DI-construction emphasizes the ontic nature of the construction, implying an epistemic-ontic interpretation.

It must be remarked that the acceptability of *budet* in the DI-construction is subject of disagreement amongst different scholars. Vinogradov & Shvedova (1964: 343), for example, claim that it is too categorical to state that *mne exat'* (I-DAT go-IMP-IMPERF) in modern Russian (nineteenth century) does not have a corresponding past or future tense construction with *bylo* or *budet*. The occurrence of past tense or future tense forms may also be related to particular styles, viz. colloquial speech and 'skaz'-style language (cf. Maurice 1996: 288; who claims that the function of *byt'* in 'byliny' (folklore stories) cannot be seen as purely temporal). It is also important to keep in mind that the marginal status of *byt'* in the case of the deontic-ontic use of the DI-construction differs from the status of *byt'* in constructions with modal adverbs, where there are no restrictions on the use of *byt'*.

In my opinion it is best to motivate the restrictions of *byt'* in the DI-construction by the specific ontic character of the construction. I would like to suggest that the difference between the function of *bylol budet* in the DI-construction and the function of the construction with *nado* must be sought in the different syntactic and semantic properties of these expressions, and the resulting difference in conceptualization. As I argued above, in the case of *nado*, the dative participant is an experiencer of a particular *state*, viz. the state of being obliged. In the case of the infinitive construction, the idea of obligation occurs as the result of the interaction between the meaning of the dative and the meaning of the infinitive. The dative participant is under the influence of some force that assigns the infinitive action, thus creating the necessity to realize the action. The idea of a recipient of an action type is a constellation that is embedded in time; we can picture a moment where the subject is not under the influence of a force, and the moment where the subject is forced to do the action. I think that because of this

---

<sup>79</sup> Vinogradov & Shvedova (1964: 340, 342) note that until the beginning of the nineteenth century *bylo* could also be used to locate the situation in a desirable counterfactual world (*bylo* in the function of *by*): *Mne pet' bylo o Troe* (Lomonosov), ('If only I could sing about Troy'), and to indicate actions that the participant should have done in the past, or to indicate an uncertain decision (e.g. *Popytat'sja bylo sprosit' u nego*; 'Should I try to ask him?'). In modern standard Russian, such use is highly infrequent.

inherent dynamic character, we often tend to interpret the action of the infinitive as a *future* action. I want to argue that because of the interference between modality and tense, *budet* is normally not expressed in the DI-construction; the construction itself expresses the idea of a future action, which makes insertion of *budet* superfluous. The form *budet* may only be expressed in those cases where the speaker wishes to emphasize that the infinitive situation is due to be realized. Such an interpretation occurs mainly in the case of the epistemic-ontic interpretation of the DI-construction (see 4.9.2). In the case of the deontic-ontic use of the construction, the emphasis on the feature of ‘inevitability’ is not possible, since this use expresses necessity based on generally accepted norms that are not linked to a specific moment in time, or the necessity to realize an action based on an individual script, where the future orientation is already expressed by other modifications such as *zavtra* and where the script as such already exists in the present.

For the restriction on the use of *bylo* a similar motivation may be given. Insertion of *bylo* in the construction leads to an additional mental step, viz. the creation of a vantage-point at a moment before the moment of speaking, from which a ‘future’ action is conceived. In many cases such an additional mental step is not in accordance with the character of the construction, especially in the case of sentences that express personal plans. The insertion of *bylo* is less restricted in the case of sentences such as (149)–(152) above, where the ‘personal plan’ character is absent, and where the narrator expresses the presence of (the absence of) necessity pertaining to the past.

(vi) Word order

The word order for the deontic-ontic use of the DI-construction is [dative infinitive]; the last accent (indicating focus) may be on the infinitive or another constituent. The *Russkaja Grammatika* (1980, II: 378) states that there is a possibility of changing this order, but the examples that are given are all cases that express impossibility. The clause initial position of the dative in the case of neutral word order is typical of constructions where the dative can be seen as the highest participant (dative subject). Since I have not attested deontic-ontic necessitive cases with a VS order, I will not analyze this order here. For the analysis of VS word order, see 4.10.1.

## (vii) Expression of negation

The DI-construction can be interpreted as a case of (de)ontic necessity in sentences with negation; in such sentences, the DI-construction expresses the absence of some necessity to do an action (e.g. (151)–(152)). I have already discussed the position of the negation in the case of the DI-construction in 4.5.2, but I will briefly analyze such sentences here as well.

As Maurice (1995: 152) remarks, the interpretation of absence of necessity occurs in those cases where the realization of the infinitive action can be evaluated negatively. Consider the following sentence:

- (153) Tebe zavtra ne vstavat' rano. (Maurice, 1995: 152)  
 You-DAT tomorrow not get.up-*INF-IMPERF* early  
 'You don't have to get up early tomorrow.'

The reason why such sentences are interpreted as cases of absence of necessity can be explained as follows. It is only informative to speak of 'not necessary X' if 'necessary X' is the case or is to be expected. This situation applies if an action that is expected to be necessary is presented as not necessary, or if the necessity that is the result of an action that is imposed on the potential agent is taken away. This description applies to (153), where the action of 'getting up early', which is not evaluated positively by the dative participant, so that the intention to do the action does not come from the dative participant, is expected to be the case.

The following context can be given for sentences like these:

**DAT (+byt'<sub>neuter</sub>) + negation + INF<sub>imperf</sub> + [presupposition: no intention of the dative participant to do Inf] → Agent has no necessity to do Inf**

Cases like these have an imperfective aspect. The imperfective aspect occurs here because the emphasis is placed on the (non-)occurrence of the action as such, and not on the (non-)reaching of the terminus of the action.

It should be noted that sentences like these are interpreted as cases of negation of necessity, although compositionally they express that some external force gives an impulse to a negative action. This explains why in past tense the negation cannot be placed before the copula, sentences but must be placed before the infinitive:

- (154) ?**Nam** ne bylo vstavat' rano.'

we-DAT not be-PAST get.up-INF-IMPERF early

- (155) **Nam** bylo ne vstavat' rano.  
we-DAT be-PAST not get.up-INF-IMPERF early  
'We didn't have to get up early.'

Placing the negation before the copula would yield a reading where the relation between the subject and the infinitive predicate is negated. Modal infinitive constructions, however, always express a relation between an action and a subject that is the result of an external force, hence the ungrammaticality of (154).

Note that in terms of modal logic, sentences like (153) share properties with cases where there is a possibility of a negated action; in logical terms:  $\neg\Box x = \Diamond \neg x$ . In the latter case the external force provides the possibility of realizing the negation of the action; compare:

- (156) Vy mozhete ne otvechat' mne.  
you can not answer-INF-IMPERF me  
'You can not answer me.'

The difference between such sentences and the DI-construction is that in the case of the DI-construction the agent has no choice about doing the action or not: some external force initiates the action not X, where not X is wanted by the agent. In the case of the DI-construction there is always some force that gives rise to some action. In the case of affirmative sentences this force is interpreted as indicating necessity, in the case of negative sentences this force must not be interpreted as indicating the absence of necessity, but rather as the presence of a force – call it necessity – that leads to the absence of some presupposed necessity. The confusion between the notion of a force leading to some action and the idea of necessity is clearly underlined by those analyses that use underlying modal operators in the analysis of the DI-construction.

The nature of the negative DI-construction also motivates why negative deontic cases of the DI-construction are interpreted as cases of 'not necessary X', instead of 'necessary not X'. In the case of 'not necessary X' there is always the implication of a choice between doing X and doing not X. In the case of the DI-construction, however, this choice is absent because of the presupposition that the agent does not want to perform the infinitive action. Sentences that are interpreted as cases of necessity to not do a situation only occur with directive sentences with a second person agent, such as (157):

- (157) Ne **otkryvat'** dver' na xodu poezda. (Rappaport, 1985: 108)  
 not open-INF-IMPERF door on motion of.train  
 'Don't open the door while the train is in motion.'

In such contexts an intention can be ascribed to non-expressed infinitive agent to do the action; the speaker can be seen as the external force that initiates the action 'not Y'.<sup>80</sup>

(viii) Interrogative sentences

The DI-construction expressing necessity also occurs in interrogative sentences with interrogatives like *kak*, *chto*, *kogda*, *gde*, *zachem*, *pochemu*, etc. The interrogative may be part of the valency structure of the infinitive, or may function as a specification of place, time, manner, etc. of the infinitive situation. Below some examples are given:

- (158) No kto ty? – U menja mnogo imen. – I kak **mne nazyvat'** tebja? – Nazyvaj menja prosto  
 A.<sup>81</sup> (M. Morozov, *Ne somnevat'sja ni v chem*)  
 but who you? – at me many names. – and how I-DAT call-INF-IMPERF you? – call me just A  
 "But who are you?" "I have many names." "And what should I call you?" "Just call me A."
- (159) – No **chego nam bojat'sja?** – Nikto ne znaet, chego imenno nuzhno bojat'sja. (A. Amal'rik; 1970)  
 but what-GEN we-DAT be.afraid-INF-IMPERF? – no.one not knows, what just need-ADV be.afraid-INF-IMPERF  
 'But what **should** we be afraid of? No-one knows, what we should be afraid of.'

In the following extract the infinitive and dative (*mne exat'*) do not occur with an interrogative, but with a specification of direction (*K ucbitelju*):

<sup>80</sup> Rappaport (1984), gives an example with a third person: *Kurgan, tak kurgan! Kazach'ej slave ne propadat'*. (Rappaport, 1984: 212/ Pavlenko) (Burial ground, so burial ground! Cossacks-DAT glory-DAT not die-INF-IMPERF; 'Burial ground or no burial ground, the glory of the Cossacks must not die!'). I think this sentence must be seen as a case of epistemic-ontic necessity ('will not die').

<sup>81</sup> [http://www.adelaida.net:8205/litera/ne\\_somneva6.html](http://www.adelaida.net:8205/litera/ne_somneva6.html)

- (160) A ne nado, – skazala Pelegeja. – Spasibo tebe, Ivan Kuz'mych, za sovetu. Mne exat' nado. I Pelageja, ostaviv na stole kulek s zernom, poshla k dveri. Potom vernulas'. – Drob'-to mne, Ivan Kuz'mych ... **Gde mne** pro ètu samuju drob'-to teper' **uznat'**? K uchitelju, chto li, **mne exat'**? (Zoshchenko, 1935)<sup>82</sup>  
(...) where I-DAT about that same fraction PRT now know-INF-PERF? to teacher, or something, I-DAT go-INF-IMPERF?  
“Oh, that’s not necessary”, said Pelegeja. “But thank you for your advice, Ivan Kuz'mych. I have to go now.” And Pelegeja, leaving the paper bag with the grain on the table, walked to the door. Then she returned. – “Where can I find out more about that fraction? Must I go to the teacher, or something?”

In the construction, the dative may be expressed in all persons; in sentences where the dative is not expressed the speaker or the generic agent can be seen as the potential agent. In cases where the interrogative clause is a subordinate clause, the potential agent may also be associated with a contextually given participant:

- (161) Judzhin Danbi ne znal, chto delat'.<sup>83</sup> (D. Chekalov, *Pust' èto vas ne bespokoit*)  
Judzhin Danbi not knew, what do-INF-IMPERF  
'Eugene Dunbee didn't know what to do.'

Interrogative instances of the DI-construction differ from assertive instances in particular respects. These difference are given in Table 4.2.

I think that the features mentioned here can be motivated by the specific nature of questions and the specific semantics of the DI-construction. For the analysis of the possibility interpretation in interrogatives, see 4.10.2; I will now briefly discuss the other features.

An important factor in the interpretation of interrogative instances of the DI-construction is aspect. As Rassudova (cited by Maurice, 1995: 155) remarks, with infinitive-interrogatives a necessitive interpretation occurs normally in the case of the imperfective aspect, whereas a possibility interpretation normally occurs in the case of the perfective aspect.

---

<sup>82</sup> Note that the first construction (**Gde mne** pro ètu samuju drob'-to teper' **uznat'**?) must be seen as a case of possibility.

<sup>83</sup> <http://www.moshkow.pp.ru:5000/lat/ZHURNAL/chekalow.txt>

Table 4.2. Differences between affirmative instances and interrogative instances

| Affirmative   | Interrogative   |
|---|---|
| The possibility interpretation occurs in special contexts only.   | No restrictions on the possibility interpretation.                                |
| The perfective aspect (in non-directive sentences) points at an interpretation of (im)possibility <sup>84</sup> . | Perfective cases may have a necessitive interpretation.                           |
| There is a relatively clear-cut opposition between necessity and (im)possibility.                                 | Neutralization of the opposition between necessity and possibility in many cases. |
| The interpretation of (de)ontic necessity is confined to specific contexts only (see 4.9.1.)                      | There are no special restrictions on the use of necessity.                        |
| The use of <i>bylo</i> is highly restricted.  | Less restriction on the use of <i>bylo</i> .                                      |
| The dative is an integral part of the construction.   | The potential agent may remain unspecified.                                       |
| The construction occupies a peripheral position in the system of modal expressions.                               | The construction occupies a central position in the system of modal expressions.  |

Maurice (1995: 155) cites the following examples from Rassudova, both without expressed dative:

- (162) Kak **posylat'** vashe pis'mo: avia ili prostym?  
 how send-INF-IMPERF your letter: air or normal?  
 'How should I send your letter: air or regular?'
- (163) Vy ne znaete, kak **poslat'** otsjuda zakaznoe pis'mo?  
 you not know, how send-INF-PERF from.here registered letter?  
 'Could you tell me how to send from here a registered letter?'

In (162) the speaker asks the hearer what act he is supposed to do, i.e. the speaker has no particular intention to fulfill the situation, and the hearer can be seen as the initiating force; the active role is indicated by the pronoun *vashe* ('your'). This sentence can be paraphrased with modal predicates that express necessity such as *dolzhen*. In

<sup>84</sup> Exceptions are discussed above.

(163) the speaker intends to realize the infinitive situation himself, and asks the addressee how he can contribute to this realization; this case has the character of possibility, which is underlined by the possibility of paraphrasing with *mozžno* or *mozh* ('may').

Maurice (1995: 156) remarks that the aspect is not the only factor that determines the interpretation, because sentences with the perfective aspect can also express necessity; she gives the following example with the lexeme *ponjat* ('understand'):

- (164)   Kak *ponjat*' vashe vyrazhenie?  
          how understand-INF-PERF your remark?  
          'How should I understand your remark?'

Maurice analyses this sentence as a case where the deontic force ('modal subject') is the addressee, and where the speaker does not desire the infinitive situation. In this sentence there might be different possibilities from which to choose, and the speaker asks the addressee which is the appropriate one. The necessitive interpretation is underlined by the possibility of paraphrasing this sentence with *dolzhen* ('must').

Maurice further argues that in other cases the opposition between possibility and necessity can be absent altogether. She illustrates this with the following example, where the infinitive occurs in a subordinate clause:<sup>85</sup>

- (165)   Ne znaju, kak *postupat*'/ *postupit*' (Maurice, 1995: 156)  
          not I.know, how act-INF-IMPERF/ act-INF-PERF  
          'I don't know how I should/ could act.'

This sentence can be paraphrased with both *nuzhno* ('need') and *mozžno* ('can'), but the difference between these paraphrases is minimal.

I do not wish to dwell on interrogatives here, but I would like to make a few suggestions for the study of these cases. It must be kept in mind that the notions of necessity and possibility are not part of the *meaning* of the construction, but are general terms to classify different *interpretations* of the construction. It is preferable to account for the choice of aspect and the occurrence or non-occurrence of the dative in isolation from the question what modality is at stake. The interpretational status of the modality of the DI-construction is underlined by the fact that in many cases the opposition between necessity and possibility is neutralized. In such cases one cannot decide on the parameters

---

<sup>85</sup> Maurice (1996: 229) gives the same example without this subordinate context.

relevant for the modal status of the construction (does the potential agent intend to realize the infinitive, or can the addressee be seen as the modal force?). To analyze this 'neutralization' or the modal character of these questions in general it is relevant to look at the following factors: (i) the pragmatics of questions, (ii) the presence or absence of a dative noun, (iii) the meaning of the lexical item, and (iv) the meaning or function of the interrogative in the construction.

In the case of the questions under discussion, the speaker asks the addressee for information pertaining to the realization of the infinitive situation. This context presupposes that the speaker wants the realization of the infinitive situation, or at least accepts the realization of the infinitive situation as a given fact. Furthermore, this context presupposes that the addressee always plays a more or less active part in the communicative context. Since the parameters for the type of modality are the intention or non-intention of the speaker to do the infinitive, and related to that the question of whether the dative participant can be seen as the modal force or not, it can be expected that in the case of questions these parameters do not have a + or – status.<sup>86</sup>

The specific pragmatics of questions also accounts for the occurrence of the necessitive interpretation without the restrictions that occur in the case of assertive sentences, where the deontic interpretation only occurs if there is some initial information state that is contradicted (see 4.9.1). In my opinion, this can be motivated as follows. In the case of questions with interrogatives, the speaker assumes that the situation will take place, but asks for information pertaining to the place, time, person, manner, etc. of the realization of this specific situation. Since the realization of the situation has already been taken into account by the speaker, the logical subject of the infinitive situation (dative participant) can be presented as being affected by the infinitive situation. Interrogatives therefore do not need an additional context of imposing (*ved'*, *zhe*, contrast, etc.) but can have a (de)ontic reading without such a context, albeit a stronger *ontic* character.

The difference in nature between modal predicates and the DI-construction in interrogatives is evidenced by the fact that in some cases, the DI-construction cannot be paraphrased with modal forms. Maurice (1996: 190, 239–240), remarks that in the following sentence with the interrogative *zachem* ('why') a paraphrase with a modal adverb is unacceptable:

- (166) *Zachem mne vrat'?*  
 why I-DAT lie-INF-IMPERF

---

<sup>86</sup> A similar motivation can be given for cases with third person datives. In such cases one can speak of free indirect speech.

‘Why would/ should I lie?’

- (167) Zachem mne nuzhno vrat’.  
why I-DAT need-ADV lie-INF

The reason that (167) is unacceptable as a paraphrase of (166) can probably be motivated as follows: in (166) the speaker asks the addressee rhetorically what reasons exist that can be seen as a force which will make him realize the infinitive situation in the future, whereas in (167) the speaker asks the addressee what the reason is that makes him obligated to perform the infinitive situation. This presupposes that the speaker accepts that he must perform the action, but does not know the exact reason for this necessity (cf. Maurice, 1995: 239). The reason for these different interpretations can be attributed to the *ontic* character of the DI-construction, which is absent in the case of *nuzhno*. The DI-construction focusses on possible reasons that will convince the speaker to realize the infinitive action in the future, whereas *nuzhno* focuses on the presently experienced need of the infinitive action.

Whether an intention to realize the situation can be ascribed to the dative participant, further hinges on the question of whether a dative is expressed, and on the specific lexical item in question. Maurice (1995) analyzes sentences where the dative is not expressed, without pointing at the different conceptualization resulting from the absence of a dative. The absence of the dative is connected to the generic status of the non-expressed infinitive subject. Although the speaker may be associated with the potential agent, the sentences given above can all be translated with ‘one’, which means that the nature of the non-expressed infinitive subject may remain unspecified. The absence of the idea of a specific agent to which the infinitive situation pertains, leads to a ‘neutralization’ of the idea of necessity and possibility, since the idea of a generic agent means that the intention to realize the infinitive situation cannot be attributed to a specific agent.

In sentences with a dative, the perfective infinitive does not necessarily mean that the sentence can be seen as a case of possibility. A paraphrase with a modal form expressing possibility is appropriate in cases where the speaker intends to realize the infinitive situation, is blocked in this realization, and asks the addressee, to give information such that the blockage is removed (see 4.10.2); such a reading is not possible with all lexical items in particular contexts. In the case with some lexical items, such as the infinitive *ponjat’l ponimat’* (‘understand’), the choice of aspect is related to other parameters than the question of whether the dative participant wants the realization of the situation or not. Consider the following sentences:

- (168) On ne ponimaet. Da i **kak emu ponjat'**<sup>87</sup> (A. & B. Strugackie, *Trudno byt' bogom*)  
 he not understand. yes and how he-DAT understand-INF-PERF?  
 'He doesn't understand. And how would/ could he understand?'
- (169) Kogda ty voshla v otverstie, mozhnet sluchit'sja vse chto ugodno. Pomni, chto nuzhno byt' ostorozhnoj i v to zhe vremja smeloi. – No **kak mne ponjat'**, chto tam est' chto? – sprosila ja.<sup>88</sup> (T. Abeljar, *Magicheskej pereexod*)  
 (...) – but how I-DAT understand-INF-PERF, what there is what? – asked I  
 'When you have gone into the hole, anything may happen. Remember, that you have to be careful and at the same time courageous. "But how do I know what is what there?", I asked.'
- (170) No uchtite – ja krut! – predupredil on (...). – **Kak mne ponimat'** vas.<sup>89</sup> (V. Pikul', *Bogatstvo*)  
 (...) how I-DAT understand-INF-IMPERF you? (...)  
 "But don't forget that I have a stern temper", he warned me (...). "How should I understand your remark?"

In the case of the perfective aspect the dative participant wishes to realize the infinitive situation, but the speaker thinks that it is not possible to realize this situation. By using the perfective aspect he stresses that in his opinion the reaching of the end point of the situation ('come to understanding') is not likely. In (170), which has an imperfective, the speaker asks the addressee to provide him with the information about the right interpretation of this words. In this case the imperfective aspect is chosen because the focus is on the question of *how* he should perform the action; the fact that he will realize the action as such is already given. A similar function of aspect can be found in the sentences given below:

- (171) Ja ne znaju **kak mne postupit'**, ja vynuzhdena na èto [abortion] poiti, mne tak bol'no i strashno.<sup>90</sup>  
 I not know how I-DAT act-INF-PERF, I need on that go, I-DAT so painful-ADV and terrible-ADV

<sup>87</sup> [http://www.moshkow.pp.ru:5000/lat/STRUGACKIE/be\\_god.txt](http://www.moshkow.pp.ru:5000/lat/STRUGACKIE/be_god.txt)

<sup>88</sup> <http://www.moshkow.pp.ru:5000/lat/KASTANEDA/taisha.txt>

<sup>89</sup> <http://lib.nordnet.ru/lat/PIKULX/bogatstvo.txt>

<sup>90</sup> <http://www.herpes.ru:8105/abort/mnenia1.htm>

'I don't know what I must do, I have to go to have an abortion, I am so hurt and terrified.'

- (172) No, po krajnej mere, ja znal, **kak mne postupat'** dal'she.<sup>91</sup> (S. Luk'janenko, *Nochnoj dozor*)  
but, in any case, I know, how I-DAT act-INF-IMPERF further  
'At least I know what I should do further.'

In (171) the speaker expresses that she does not know what to do, in a situation where it is clear that something should be done; in (172) the speaker has already taken the decision to engage in the infinitive situation, and focuses on *how* in particular he will engage in it. Note that *dal'she* expresses the idea of continuation, which triggers the imperfective aspect.

#### 4.9.2 Epistemic-ontic necessity

The following sentences are examples of what I call epistemic-ontic interpretations of the DI-construction:

- (173) Ne rasti trave/ Posle oseni/ Ne cvesti cvetam/ Zimoj po snegu! (A. Kol'tsov, *Pesnja*)  
not grow-INF-IMPERF grass-DAT/ after autumn:/ not flower-INF-IMPERF flowers-DAT/ in.winter on snow  
'Grass will not grow after the autumn, flowers will not bloom in the winter on the snow!'
- (174) [Ja] znaju – sadu cvest' (...).(Bricyn, 1990: 219/ Majakovskij)  
I know, garden-DAT blossom-INF-IMPERF  
'I know that the garden will blossom.'
- (175) – Byl ja segodnja v bol'nice u Danila Aleksandrycha. I skazal on mne, chto u menja neizlechimaja bolezn', rak zheludka, cherez dva mesjaca **mne umirat'**, a èto vremja **stradat' i muchit'sja** strashnymi mukami. (B. Pil'njak, *Gol'nyj god*)  
– was I today in hospital at Danil Aleksandrycha. and told he me, that at me untreatable illness, cancer of.stomach, over two months I-DAT die-INF-IMPERF, and that time suffer-INF-IMPERF and be.tortured-INF-IMPERF by.terrible pains

---

<sup>91</sup> [http://sf.glasnet.ru:8105/lukian/books/nochnoy\\_dozor/nochnoy\\_dozor\\_1\\_07.htm](http://sf.glasnet.ru:8105/lukian/books/nochnoy_dozor/nochnoy_dozor_1_07.htm)

‘Today, I visited Danil Aleksandrych at the hospital. And he told me, that I have a terminal illness, cancer of the stomach, in two months I will die, and before that time I will suffer, and be tormented by terrible pains.’

- (176) Nam kazalos’ – mashina ne xochet/ I ne mozhnet rabotat’ na nas./ Zavtra **mne i mashine v odnu dut’ dudu**/ V avarijnom rezhime u vsekh na vidu, – / Ty mne nozh naposledok ne vsazhivaj v sheju.<sup>92</sup> (V. Vysockij, *My vzletali kak utki ...*)  
 (...) tomorrow I-DAT and car-DAT in one blow whistle-INF-IMPERF  
 ‘It seemed to us that the car didn’t want to/ And wasn’t able to work for us./ Tomorrow me and my car will sing the same tune/ In the safety procedures, in front of everyone/ At last, don’t put your knife on my throat.’
- (177) No bystro **postaret’ ej**. (The Penguin book of Russian Verse, 1962: P. Anatol’sky)  
 but swiftly become.old-INF-IMPERF she-DAT  
 ‘Yet it will age swiftly.’
- (178) Ne **byt’ miru i porjadku**, poka Imperija ne raskinetsja, kak ran’she (...) <sup>93</sup> (A. Koul, *Vozvrachshenie imperatora*)  
 not be-INF peace-DAT and order-DAT, as.long.as empire not will.spread.out, as before  
 ‘There won’t be peace and order, as long as the empire doesn’t extend, as before.’

In the case of the epistemic-ontic interpretation of the DI-construction, the DI-construction expresses that the infinitive situation will necessarily occur *because* of the way things go. This particular interpretation can best be explained if we compare this use of the DI-construction with its oppositional form, viz. the future tense *budet*. A sentence with a future tense like *budet dozhd’* (‘there will be rain’) expresses that the situation ‘raining’ will occur in the future, whereas a sentence with an infinitive like *byt’ dozhdju* (‘there will be rain’) expresses that the situation will *inevitably* or *necessarily* occur because of the way things go or are (‘fate’). By using the DI-construction in such cases the speaker implicitly contradicts the idea that the dative participant would not be the subject of the infinitive situation; instead the speaker expresses that the dative participant is necessarily ‘affected’. Because of its specific epistemic-ontic meaning, this use of the DI-construction has a rather pathetic character, and primarily occurs in poetic speech.

<sup>92</sup> <http://kulichki-lat.rambler.ru/vv/pesni/my-vzletali-kak-utki.html>

<sup>93</sup> <http://www.atlant.ru:8070/library/koul/ComeBack/116.htm>

Apresjan (1992) claims that the construction with *byt'* + dative must be seen as an independent construction, i.e. the meaning of the construction cannot be motivated from the meaning of its parts or from other constructions, and is therefore not an instance of the class of modal infinitive sentences. I agree with Maurice (1996: 136), who argues that this statement is too strong. Nevertheless, I think that the epistemic-ontic use of the DI-construction shows strong idiomatic features. Expressions such as *byt' groze* ('there will be thunder'), *byt' bede* ('there will be misfortune') can be seen as more or less fixed expressions. Furthermore, the construction very frequently occurs with verbs like *byt'* ('be'), *rasti* ('grow'), *vesti* ('flower'), *zhit'* ('live'), and *umirat'* ('die'). The frequent occurrence of these verbs may possibly be motivated by the meaning of the construction, as I will explain below, but I am not sure whether this motivates the entire distribution of this use.

How can we arrive at the epistemic-ontic interpretation if we start out from the abstract meaning of the DI-construction? We start out from the abstract meaning given earlier, and specify it with a context (see Figure 4.13).

Figure 4.13

---

**The agent (expressed in the dative form) is the recipient of a situation Y, i.e. x does not initiate Y himself**

+ *Semantic-syntactic features*:

- (i) Y is prototypically imperfective.
- (ii) x is always expressed.
- (iii) x is animate or inanimate.
- (iv) If x is animate, then Y is not controllable or indicates a state, *unless* it occurs with specific formal features like accentuation of Y or modifications like *bol'she ne, uzhe ne, vse ravno, nikogda, ni v chem, ne vse* etc., whose function is to assert the (non-)existence of Y (and which overrules the prototypical Aktionsart of the verb).
- (v) The infinitive can be negated.
- (vi) prototypical [dative infinitive] order; in the case of the verb *byt'* [infinitive dative order].
- (vii) The future tense indication *budet* occurs in some cases.

*Interpretation:*

Because the agent is inanimate, or animate but the potential subject of an uncontrollable action, there can be no ‘real world force’ that compels the agent to do the action. However, we can still speak of the agent as the recipient of the action because the action will *inevitably* occur, that is, the speaker presents the occurrence of the action not as the result of the initiation of the participant, but as something that will *necessarily be the case, because of the way things go*:

**The agent (expressed in the dative form) is the recipient of a situation type assigned to him by some force like destiny or fate, i.e. the agent is ‘compelled’ to do the infinitive situation in the sense that *the way things go* leads inevitably to the situation being the case.**

By using the DI-construction the speaker makes explicit that no alternative situation is possible, and that the dative participant is necessarily affected by the infinitive situation.

The description given above needs further explanation. For this it may be useful to contrast my analysis with that of Sweetser (1990: 58–65), who discusses the occurrence of epistemic necessity in English. She claims that epistemic necessity is the epistemic counterpart of the root-modal (in my terms ‘deontic modal’) *must*, and proposes that root-modal meanings, like the English *must* or *may*, can be extended metaphorically from the ‘real’ (socio-physical) world to the epistemic world, since in the case of epistemic necessity, evidence can be seen as a force that compels the speaker to draw a particular conclusion. Her analysis differs from traditional treatments of epistemic modality in that she claims that the epistemic interpretation must be seen as a metaphoric extension of the deontic interpretation, and that the mapping from the domain of root-modality to the epistemic domain is a *basic* mapping in language, in other words, it occurs in many different domains of the language system.

Although Sweetser’s analysis is successful for the English modals, it is not clear whether it can also be applied to the DI-construction. The occurrence of the dative suggests that it is not the speaker who is conceptualized as ‘forced’ (‘I am forced to draw the conclusion etc.’), but rather the dative participant itself. If we follow Sweetser’s line of thought for the Russian infinitive, it is not clear how we can map the idea of a participant being forced to the idea of the speaker being forced, without an intermediate step where both the participant itself and the speaker are in some way forced. It therefore seems better to follow the line of thought proposed by Jakobson

(1990 [1936]: 359), who speaks about a *fated necessity* ('destiny') in the case of sentences like *byt' dozhd'ju*. The same idea is expressed by Maurice (1996: 132–134), who refers to 'the events as they are predicated from above, and the way things go'. I wish to argue, therefore, that in the case of the DI-construction the epistemic interpretation always has an ontic flavor. This means that the external force leading to the occurrence of the event must be identified as something like a regular pattern in reality, in other words, 'the way things go'. This pattern 'compels' the agent to do the infinitive action, and *as such* leads the speaker to the conclusion that the event will occur:

- (179) Vse nebo zakryto tuchami. **Byt' sil'nomu dozhd'ju.**  
all sky covered with.clouds. Be-INF strong-DAT rain-DAT  
'The sky is all covered with clouds. There will be heavy rain.'

Because the initiator is not a particular entity, but a regularity in the world, the occurrence of the action is not linked to an ideal level, but to an absolute level: the action will necessarily occur.

Note that the idea of *necessity* as the result of the speaker being forced to draw a particular conclusion is weakened or even absent in particular contexts, which can be seen as further evidence for the 'fated' analysis. This is the case for example in the following sentence:

- (180) Kak verevochke ni vit'sja, konec vse ravno budet. (Osipova, 1992: 25/ Proverb)  
how string-DAT not unwind-INF-IMPERF, end all.the.same will.be  
'No matter how you wrap people around your finger, there will come an end to it anyway.'

In this case the speaker is not forced to draw the conclusion that a particular action will be the case, but it is expressed that no matter what destiny will be, no matter how things will go, the occurrence of the infinitive action will not lead to the action mentioned in the second clause. As such, the idea of necessity is absent in this sentence, although we can still speak of a *fated* interpretation.

I have claimed that in the case of the epistemic-ontic interpretation of the DI-construction, we can still speak of a recipient, because the action is not the result of the intention of the subject, but is initiated by something like fate or the way things go. In order to interpret the DI-construction as such, we need a specific context. Below I will discuss the contexts as they are given above in more detail.

## (i) Aspect

The aspect of the epistemic-ontic DI-construction is normally imperfective. For this the same explanation can be given as for the imperfective aspect in the case of the deontic interpretation. In the case of epistemic-ontic necessity the speaker focuses on the fact that some action is imposed on the dative participant and that he will *engage* in the action; in such sentences the fact that the action will necessarily be realized is not is not highlighted. In some cases, however, one finds the perfective aspect, e.g.:

- (181) **Im** skoro **stat'** soldatami. (Rappaport, 1985: 209/ *Russkaja Grammatika*, 1980, II)  
they-DAT soon become-INF-PERF soldiers  
'They are about to become soldiers.'
- (182) Tak chto, – zagovoril on toroplivo, – front, bozhe soxrani, prodvigaetsja ... Ili **nam** **podat'sja** v glub' strany ... Ili, mozhet byt', **ostat'sja** .... (A. Zoshchenko, 1935)  
(...) or we-DAT draw.forward in depth of.land ... or, maybe, stay-INF-PERF  
"So", he said in a hurry, – "the front, may God protect us, is moving forward ... Either we will have to draw forward into the heart of the country ... Or, maybe, we will stay."

In the first case the perfective aspect focuses on the end point of the process of becoming a soldier, as such pointing to the situation where they *are* soldiers. The second sentence can be seen as an intermediate case between deontic-ontic necessity and ontic necessity with an epistemic nuance. This sentence can be paraphrased with constructions/ forms like *stoiť* ('have to'), *luchshe (by)* ('it's better'), *nado* ('must'), *dolzhen* ('must'), and also with the verb *moč'* ('can'). The perfective aspect focuses on the desirable result of the situation ('we will be in the heart of the country'/ 'we will still be in the same place'), and not on the fact that the subject will engage in the situation.

## (ii-v) The nature of the dative participant and the infinitive situation

The dative participant may be an inanimate agent or an animate agent. Sentences with inanimate agents are often sentences that express the necessary occurrence of natural phenomena, like *cvesti sadu* ('The garden will blossom.') or *byt' grom* ('There will be thunder.'). In cases like these it is clear that we cannot interpret the DI-construction in a deontic way: there is no force that compels the agent to do the action, because the agent is inanimate and the action consequently uncontrollable. In these sentences it is some *pattern in nature* that is observed by the speaker as *evidence*, that will lead inevitably

to the *occurrence* or *existence* of the action. If the dative participant is an animate agent, it needs a particular context in order to be interpreted as a case of epistemic-ontic necessity, rather than a case of deontic necessity. If the agent is animate and the agent cannot control the action, the DI-construction is interpreted as a case of epistemic necessity. These are often sentences with the ‘existential’ verbs *byt* (‘be’), *ne byvat*, *zhit* (‘live’), *umirat* (‘die’); below some examples are given with the verb *byt*, *byvat*:

- (183) Ox, neraschetlivyj ty tip, Sapargaliev! – vzdoxnul Èdik. – **Ne byt’ tebe bogatym i zashitochnym.** (V. Kunin, *Russkie na Marienplac*)  
(...) not be-INF you-DAT rich and well-to-do  
“Oh, what a wasteful type you are, Sapargaliev!”, said Edik. “You won’t be rich or well-to-do.”
- (184) Kogda slushal tolki, chto **byt’** skoro **Mit’ke** glavnym inzhenerom kolxoz, nichego ne govoril. (Bricyn, 1990: 224/ Ivanov)  
when heard rumours, that be-INF soon Mit’ka-DAT head engineer of.kolkhoz,  
nothing not said  
‘When he/ I heard the rumours that Mit’ka would soon be the head engineer, he/ I said nothing.’
- (185) **Ne byvat’ Sadku** so sinja morja! (The Penguin book of Russian verse, 1962/ *Byliny*)  
not be-INF Sadko-DAT from blue sea!  
‘Sadko will not be returning from the blue sea.’

Maurice (1996: 130) argues that the absence of controllability is present in all the cases of the ontic interpretation of the DI-construction. Put differently, if we encounter an instance of the DI-construction and we have to interpret it, the controllability of the verb determines whether it should be interpreted as a case of (de)ontic necessity, or as a case of epistemic-ontic necessity. The problem is, however, that it is not clear which verbs can be seen as controllable, and which not. Maurice argues that the controllability of a verb can be tested by inserting the verb in a *chtoby* (‘in order to’) clause. If the verb can be inserted in a *chtoby* clause without losing its purposive meaning, it can be said to have the feature [+control]:

+ *control*

- (186) **My zashli k sovedke, chtoby ona ne obidelas’.**  
we went to neighbor, in.order she not be.insulted

'We went to the neighbor, so that she wouldn't be insulted.'

- *control*

- (187) \*Solnce zashlo, chtoby bylo temno.  
sun set, in.order was dark.
- (188) Ego dolgo nosilo po svetu, i nakonec on priexal sjuda, chtoby cherez polgoda umeret' zdes' ot maljarii. (Bulygina, 1982: 69)  
him long it.carried over world, and at.last he came here, in.order over half.a.year die here of malaria  
'He wandered all over the world, and at last he came here, to die of malaria in half a year.'

Although it may be the case that the specific epistemic *interpretation* of the DI-construction implies that the action is *perceived* as not controlled by the agent, we cannot judge from the verb alone whether it will be interpreted as a case of (de)ontic necessity or epistemic-ontic necessity. Some verbs that are controllable according to the test given above can, without special context, be interpreted as cases of epistemic-ontic necessity (such as *letet* ('fly')), while other verbs that are controllable need a specific context to be interpreted as such. The claim that controllability is the distinguishing factor in whether the DI-construction is interpreted as a case of (de)ontic necessity or epistemic-ontic necessity can therefore not be maintained.

It seems that an important factor in the interpretation of the DI-construction is the *Aktionsart* of the verb. An analysis based on this idea can be found in Steedman (1977) for the English modals *must, will, may*. Steedman claims that the difference between the epistemic interpretation and the deontic interpretation of the English modals is connected with the *Aktionsart* of the verb with which it is combined. He claims that verbs naturally fall into two groups. The first group – of *events* – includes activities, accomplishments, and achievements. They all describe what *happened* or what someone *did*. The second group – of *states* – describe *something being the case*. Steedman claims that if the verb with which the modal form is combined is interpreted as a state, it is interpreted as a case of epistemic modality, and if it is interpreted as an event, it is interpreted as a case of (de)ontic necessity.

Steedman's analysis can be used for the DI-construction in the following way: in order to interpret the DI-construction as a case of epistemic necessity we *necessarily* have to interpret the infinitive-situation as a state: the epistemic DI-construction

*Meaning and interpretation of the DI-construction*

expresses that a particular action will necessarily *be the case*. Some verbs have a meaning that make them interpretable as such. Bricyn remarks (1990: 226–227) that among the typical verbs that occur in the DI-construction in an epistemic interpretation we find verbs that indicate ongoing processes or states, rather than events that are linked to a specific moment in time. These include verbs that indicate position, like *stojat* ('stand'), *sidet* ('sit'). Other verbs that are normally interpreted as cases of epistemic necessity are those that indicate physical or psychological influence on a person, like *stradat* ('suffer') and *muchit'sja* ('be tormented') in (175). As Bricyn (1990: 227) mentions, such actions cannot easily be planned, which makes it difficult to associate them with a specific moment in time:

- (189) ?Mne v 5 chasov nad nim nasmexat'sja. (Bricyn, 1990: 227)  
I-DAT at 5 o' clock at him make.fun-INF-IMPERF  
'I have to make fun of him at 5 o'clock.'

Other verbs are normally interpreted as events, but can indicate a state if they occur in the right context. Such a context can be provided by (a) a particular accentuation or (b) occurrence of particular modifications such as negation. An example of the influence of accentuation is given below:

*Deontic use*

- (190) **Emu chitat'** knígu.  
he-DAT read-INF-IMPERF book  
'He **has** to read the book.'

*Epistemic use*

- (191) **Emu chítát'** knígu.  
he-DAT read-INF-IMPERF book.  
'He **will** read the book.'

In (190) it is expressed that the agent must do a particular action, whereas in (191), with the accent on the infinitive, it is expressed that a particular action will be the case. An accented infinitive negates the presupposition that the infinitive action is not the case.

Other features that influence the interpretation of the DI-construction are particular forms like *uzhe ne*, *bol'she ne* ('not anymore'), *vse ravno ne* ('not anyway'):

- (192) **Mne** volos tvoix/ ne trogat' bol'she/ Gub tvoix, Alena/ **Mne** ne celovat'<sup>94</sup> (Song text)  
I-DAT hair your/ not touch-INF-IMPERF anymore/ Lips your, Alena/ I-DAT not  
kiss-INF-IMPERF  
'I won't touch your hair anymore, and your lips, Alena, I won't kiss.'
- (193) **Emu** uzhe ne chitat' knig. (Bricyn, 1990: 226)  
he-DAT already not read-INF-IMPERF books.  
'He won't read books anymore.'

These forms emphasize the fact that the infinitive situation will not occur in the future, by contrasting it with the occurrence of the action in the present (*bol'she ne*, *uzhe ne*), or by expressing that no matter how things go the action will not take place (*vse ravno ne*). It seems that if these modifications occur, the DI-construction is always interpreted as a case of epistemic-ontic necessity. This means that sentences like (192)–(193) cannot be interpreted as expressing absence of necessity, even if the infinitive situation is interpreted as a negative state. The motivation for this may be that in the case of negation, the realization of the infinitive situation is not related to a specific moment in time. Note furthermore that such sentences can in principle be interpreted as cases of impossibility if an intention to realize the situation is ascribed to the dative subject. This underlines the close relation between these various interpretations and the interpretative status of the different uses.

#### (vi) Word order

The word order is mostly [Dative infinitive], as in the case of deontic-ontic use. In the case of the construction with *byt'*, however, the order is [*byt'* dative].<sup>95</sup> Timofeev (1950: 279) argues that this order gives the construction a nuance of inevitability, and therefore a greater expressiveness. This specific order here must be motivated by the meaning of *byt'*. I will give the following tentative motivation. The verb *byt'* cannot be in a focus position in this construction (it cannot have the last accent) because that

<sup>94</sup> <http://math.ucsd.edu/~broido/lyr/K08/K08.05.lat.html>

<sup>95</sup> An exception must be made for the saying *Chemu byt', togo [tomu] ne minovat'*. ('What must happen, you cannot avoid.'). but this construction has a different semantic structure.

arrangement would presuppose a contrast with another situation relevant for the dative subject, or would presuppose that the dative subject does not exist:

- (194) ?**Bede býť**.  
misfortune-DAT be-INF

- (i) Contradiction of a 'relevant alternative' situation. (cf. Verhagen, 1986; for this term)  
(ii) Contradiction of the presupposition that *beda* does not exist.

Both interpretations are pragmatically odd. The first because no such alternative situation can be given, the second because it presupposes the idea of a world where misfortune does not exist at all.

- (vii) Occurrence of *budet*

In some cases *budet*, the future tense of *být*, is used to stress that the scene expressed by the DI-construction is related to a time after the moment of speaking:

- (195) A o chem ja dumaju? Vot o chem: chem **nam zhit' budet**?<sup>96</sup> (letter from Pushkin)  
but about what I think? here about what: through.what we-DAT live-INF-IMPERF  
will.be  
'About what I think? Here is what I think: on what will we live?'
- (196) Froľu **nesdobrovat' budet**. (*Russkaja Grammatika*, 1980, II: 376/ Shukshin)  
Froľ-DAT turn.out.badly-INF-IMPERF will.be  
'It will turn out badly for Froľ.'

Such uses are infrequent (Maurice, 1996). I think the restrictions can be explained in terms of the interference of the future tense with modality. The auxiliary *bylo* is not expressed in the construction, which can be motivated by the ontic nature of this use.<sup>97</sup>

---

<sup>96</sup> <http://www.magister.msk.ru:8085/library/pushkin/bio/puvj.htm>

<sup>97</sup> The *Russkaja Grammatika* (1980, II: 376) notes that *bylo* occurs in an old saying; this use is not productive in modern Russian.

### 4.9.3 The construction with *zhe*, negation and imperfective infinitives: In-between imposing and blocking

The imperfective infinitive occurs in sentences with the particle *zhe* ('after all') and negation:

- (197) Muzhchina dostig svoej celi – on isportil-taki ej nastroenie. V konce koncov, **ne emu zhe odnomu razdrazhat'sja**<sup>98</sup> (O. Malaxov & A. Vasilenko, *Okean Protivopozhbnosti*)  
 (...) after all, not he-DAT PRT alone-DAT be.annoyed-INF-IMPERF  
 'The man achieved his goal, he also spoiled her mood. After all, he couldn't possibly be irritated alone.'
- (198) **Ne vsem zhe** v stolicax **zhit'**! (A. Zoshchenko, 1935)  
 not all-DAT PRT in capitals live-INF-IMPERF  
 'After all, we cannot all live in the capital!'
- (199) A chto ja mog sdelat' eshche? **Ne ustupat' zhe bylo** emu svoju dolzhnost'. (S. Dovlatov, *Kompromiss*)  
 but what I could do still? not let.have-INF-IMPERF PRT was-NEUT him own duty  
 'But what more could I do? After all, I couldn't possibly hand over his duty to him.'
- (200) Kak zhe byt'? **Ne dozhidat'sja zhe mne** vashogo muzha! (A. Chexov, *Rasskazy*)  
 how PRT be? not wait-INF-IMPERF PRT I-DAT your husband  
 'But what should I do? I can't possibly wait here for your husband.'
- (201) **Ne mne zhe odnomu** obo vsem ètom **dumat'**.<sup>99</sup>  
 not I-DAT PRT alone-DAT about everything think-INF-IMPERF  
 'I can't possibly think about everything myself.'
- (202) I kak xorosho, chto ja vchera gostincev kupil, – **ne exat' zhe** v Petushki bez gostincev.<sup>100</sup> (V. Erofeev, *Moskva – Petushki*)  
 and how good, that I yesterday gift bought, – not go-INF-IMPERF PRT in Petushki without gifts  
 'And how good that I bought some presents yesterday, after all one can't go to Petushka without gifts.'

<sup>98</sup> [http://www.litera.ru:8085/slova/malahov\\_vasilenko/ocean.htm](http://www.litera.ru:8085/slova/malahov_vasilenko/ocean.htm)

<sup>99</sup> <http://www.moshkow.pp.ru:5000/lat/ZHURNAL/savelichev.txt>

<sup>100</sup> <http://lib.ru/lat/EROFEEW/petushki.txt>

The following semantic-syntactic information is relevant for this construction:

- *Ne* and *zhe* (and sometimes *ved'*) are obligatory elements of the construction.
- *Ne* and *zhe* are placed respectively before and after the constituent with the sentence accent, or in the case of second datives, as in (201) above, around the first dative
- The infinitive is imperfective.
- The construction occurs with first, second and third person datives.
- Cases with a third person always occur in free indirect speech (Maurice, 1996: 108).
- In many cases the dative participant is not expressed; such cases have a generic character (202), although the speaker may be associated with the potential agent. (Maurice, 1996: 108).
- The verb *bylo* occurs in the construction; no attestation of *budet*.
- Both VS and SV order occur.

This construction can be seen as an intermediate case between possibility and necessity (cf. Maurice, 1996: 112). The fact that the construction can be analyzed both as a case of necessity and as a case of possibility can be motivated as follows.

The construction is uttered in a context where the speaker proposes that it might be argued that the realization of the infinitive situation by the potential agent is the case, or is appropriate. By using the construction under discussion the speaker appeals to a generally accepted fact (implicitly referred to by *zhe*) that can be seen as a norm that assigns the non-realization of the infinitive situation to the potential agent. This means that according to this norm, the realization of the infinitive situation is inappropriate, not possible, or not permitted. In contrast to actual cases of impossibility, with the perfective aspect, no actual intention is ascribed to the potential agent to realize the infinitive situation. The ascription of an intention to the potential agent in the case of this construction has only a rhetorical value ('the hypothetical statement that X would be appropriate is not correct, since according to some generally accepted norm the realization of X is inappropriate'). As such, cases like these are close to necessitive cases.

The construction under discussion expresses very clearly the 'contrastive' nature of the DI-construction: the initial information state that the dative participant could be the performer of the infinitive situation is contradicted with reference to an indisputable fact, sustained by the particle *zhe*; this means that the dative participant is

necessarily affected by the (non-occurrence of) infinitive situation. For the expression of *bylo*, see 4.9.1. For the word order, see 4.10.1.

#### 4.9.4 Sentences with imperfective infinitives that express the idea of 'being capable of'

In some cases the DI-construction occurs with an imperfective infinitive in sentences where the idea of being the recipient of the infinitive situation is connected to the idea of 'being able to' or 'being capable of'; such sentences can be paraphrased with modal predicates of possibility, such as *mozžno* and *sposoben*. Two examples are given below:

- (203) Ty ne romantik! – busheval Pashka.– **Tebe sidet'** doma i **razvodit'** kvadratnye arbuzy!<sup>101</sup> (K. Bulychev, *Ga'-do i ego gospozha*)  
 you are not a romantic! – said Pashka in a rage – you-DAT sit-INF-IMPERF at.home and grow-INF-IMPERF square melons  
 “‘You are not a romantic!’, Pashka said in a rage. “‘You will wind up staying home and growing square melons/ you are capable of staying home and growing square melons.’”  
 (that is, do something dull or boring).
- (204) Ot'elsja ty, komandir. V shtabe **tebe sidet'**, a ne **voevat'**. (S. Luk'janenko, *Osennie vizity*)  
 overate you, commander. in headquarters you-DAT sit-INF-IMPERF, and not fight-INF-IMPERF  
 ‘You have become fat, commander. Your place is to sit in the headquarters, and not to fight.’

In both sentences the occurrence of the dative is facilitated by the contrastive reading of the sentence, which is implied in (203) and explicit in (204). In contrast to the sentences that express impossibility and possibility with a perfective aspect, in these sentences no actual intention is ascribed to the dative participant to realize the infinitive situation, but it is expressed that 'the dative participant has such properties that the only thing for him to do is the infinitive situation'. Sentences like these show that in some cases it is difficult to make a distinction between cases that express necessity and cases that express possibility, since these terms do not adequately describe the actual meaning and interpretation of the construction.

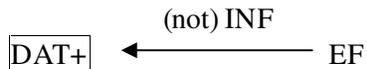
---

<sup>101</sup> <http://sf.glasnet.ru:8105/kb/stories/gaj-do/text-00.htm>

#### 4.10 'Impossibility' and 'possibility': Cases of blocking and deblocking

In this section I will discuss uses that express impossibility or possibility. Such uses can be visually represented as shown in Figure 4.14.

Figure 4.14\*



\* INF=the action expressed by the infinitive; DAT=the participant expressed by the dative; EF=external force

In the case of the (im)possibility interpretation of the DI-construction, the dative participant is not the initiator of the action because (a) he *intends* to realize the action but the realization of the action is blocked by an external force (which makes the dative participant the recipient of action not INF), or (b) the dative participant *intends* to realize the action, but he is blocked, and this blockage is removed (which makes the dative participant the recipient of INF). The following general context can be given for such cases:

**DAT + (negation/deblocking) + (bylo/budet) + INF<sub>perf</sub> + [presupposition: intention x to realize Inf] → There is some (im)possibility for the agent to do Inf**

Cases of (im)possibility can be paraphrased in Russian with modal forms, e.g. (*ne*) *moch'*, (*ne*) *udat'sja* and with the perfective present. In the next two sections I will discuss how the DI-construction can be interpreted as a case of impossibility or possibility. I will discuss sentences without negation separately because of the special position that they occupy in the use of the DI-construction.

##### 4.10.1 'Impossibility' and related cases

The following sentences are examples of impossibility interpretations of the DI-construction:

- (205) Nikuda **vam** **ne skryt'sja** ot gibli. Nikuda ne ujtj ot vraga. (Bricyn, 1990: 230/ Esenin)  
nowhere you-DAT not hide-INF-PERF from death. never not go away-INF-PERF  
from enemy.

'There is not place where you can hide to escape death. You won't succeed escaping the enemy.'

- (206) **Emu** ved' ne **ujti** iz goroda.<sup>102</sup> (N. Shitova, *Derz'kaja*)  
he-DAT PRT not go.from-INF-PERF from city  
'After all, he can't leave town.'
- (207) Svoboda, Paul', – funkcija organizma! **Tebe** ètogo ne **ponjat'**! Ved' ty rodilsja svobodnym, kak ptica!<sup>103</sup> (S. Dovatov, *Kompromiss*)  
(...) you-DAT that not understand-INF-PERF!  
'Freedom, Paul, is a function of the organism. You can't understand that! After all, you were born free like a bird.'
- (208) No, ponimaja, chto bez pomoshchi **mne** uzhe ne **obojtis'**, ja vse zhe otpravilsja na ispoved' v xram pri Staroj Shkole.<sup>104</sup> (U. LeGuin, *Esbche odna istorija, ili rybak iz vnutrimor'ja*)  
but, understanding that without help I-DAT already not go.around-INF-PERF, I all PRT went on confession in church near old school  
'But, since I understood that I wouldn't be able to cope without help, I went to confession in the church near the Old School.'
- (209) Odin gospodin iz Berdicheva/ sel na sled isprazhnenija ptich'ego./ Ogljadvshi svoj frak./ on skazal – èto znak./ tol'ko smysl **mne** ne **postich'** ego.<sup>105</sup>  
(...)/ just meaning I-DAT not reach-INF-PERF him.  
'A man from Berdichevo/ sat down on some birds droppings/ After looking at his suit./ he said: "It's a sign./ I just won't be able to find the meaning of it."'

These sentences express that the agent of the infinitive situation intends to realize the infinitive situation, but is blocked in this attempt. Note that the term intention does not necessarily mean that the agent *consciously* plans to realize a situation; in some cases the imagination of the realization of the infinitive situation is just seen as something positive. In all cases the speaker contradicts the initial information state that the infinitive situation is the case/ realizable by expressing that the dative subject fails in

<sup>102</sup> <http://kulichki-lat.rambler.ru/moshkow/PROZA/shitowa.txt>

<sup>103</sup> <http://lib.r-isp.net/lat/DOWLATOW/kompromiss.txt>

<sup>104</sup> <http://mirror.primorye.ru/moshkow/lat/LEGUIN/rybakizwnutrimoriya.txt>

<sup>105</sup> <http://www.anekdot.ru:8084/iron-month-9806.html>

realizing the intended situation. As in the case of the necessitive use of the DI-construction, the typical ontic nature may be underlined by particles like *uzbe ne*, and *ved'*.

Note that the verbs with which the impossibility interpretation of the DI-construction occurs, often indicate situations where the subject deliberately strives to reach the natural end point of the situation (Bricyn, 1990: 235). In such cases the negation of the infinitive in combination with the meaning of the dative emphasizes the fact that the speaker is not in the position to *realize* the action. Sentences like these can be paraphrased with a dative subject and the form *udat'sja* ('succeed'). This form, combined with negation, *expresses* the failing of the subject in realizing the intended action. The idea of succeeding is less clearly present in the case of modal forms with a nominative subject like *smoch'* ('can'). This form indicates an inherent property of the subject, and, unlike the DI-construction, has a future oriented meaning. Because of the different semantics of *smoch'* and the DI-construction, the DI-construction can not be paraphrased with *smoch'* in all contexts:

- (210) Tebe ne zapugat' menja (...). (Maurice, 1996: 104/ MM)  
you-DAT not frighten-INF-PERF me  
'You won't frighten me.'
- (211) Ty ne smozhesh' zapugat' menja. (incorrect as a paraphrase of (210))  
you-NOM not can-1sg-PERF frighten-INF-PERF me

Sentence (210) expresses the general statement that the dative participant has such properties that he is not in the position to frighten the speaker, whereas the statement in (211) has a clear future oriented character, and therefore a less general and more specific meaning. The general character of (210) is the result of the ontic character of the construction. Note that in the case of verbs that do not indicate goal-oriented actions, the impossibility interpretation takes on an even clear epistemic-ontic character, e.g. (208). This character can be traced back to the *meaning* of the DI-construction: the DI-construction expresses that agent x is the *recipient* of state type not Y. A sentence like *mne ne projti* (lit. 'to me not go through') expresses that the agent will not be the recipient of the action of *projti*, because of particular circumstances or because of the way things are.

In many contexts the DI-construction can be paraphrased with the perfective present, for example in (210): *Ty menja ne zapugaesh'*. This form, however, lacks the

aspect of the specific *ontic* nature of the DI-construction. Consider the following sentences:

- (212) Nikogda **mne** ètogo ne **zabyt'**.<sup>106</sup> (U. LeGuin, *Eshebe odna istorija, ili rybak iz vnutrimor'ja*)  
 never I-DAT that not forget-INF-PERF  
 'I will never forget that.'
- (213) My v teatre vstretilis', a ne v posteli, Olimpiada Nikolaevna! I vot ètogo ja ne zabudu nikogda!<sup>107</sup> (N. Ptushkina, *Plachu vpered*)  
 (...) and PRT that I not forget-PRS-PERF never! (...)  
 'We met in the theatre, and not in the bed, Olimpiada Nikolaevna! And I will never forget that!'

In the first sentence, with the DI-construction, the speaker expresses that no matter what she tries, the way things are is such that she will not forget. In (213), with the perfective present, the speaker asserts that he will never forget, *without stressing* that the non-occurrence of the situation is due to factors outside of his will. The construction with the perfective present and the verb *zabyt'* has a future oriented meaning, whereas the DI-construction has a more general character.

In 4.9.1 I already pointed out that the position of the negation is in full accordance with the meaning of the construction. As such, strategies like 'negative transportation' are not needed to motivate the negation in such sentences. Furthermore, I argued that that the impossibility interpretation cannot be reduced to a necessitive interpretation (necessary not  $X \neq$  not possible  $X$ ). In the case of the DI-construction, the meaning of necessity expressed by the construction cannot be defined as a logical operator of necessity ' $\square$ ', because the necessity is the result of the idea of being a recipient of an action type, and is not the result of some presupposed operation of necessity. Both in the case of the necessitive interpretation, and in the case of the impossibility interpretation, the meaning of *recipient* plays a part. This idea of being a recipient of an action type  $X$  cannot be equated with ' $\square X$ ', where  $y$  is the subject of  $X$ . The idea of the agent as a recipient of an action type can be interpreted as a case of negation of necessity ( $\neg \square X$ ), or as a case of impossibility ( $\neg \diamond X$ ), depending on the context in which it occurs. In the case of impossibility we start out from the perspective of the

<sup>106</sup> <http://mirror.primorye.ru/moshkow/lat/LEGUIN/rybakizwnutrimoriya.txt>

<sup>107</sup> <http://www.theatre.ru:8084/drama/ptushkina/plachu1.html>

subject of the situation that has an intention to fulfill the action, whereas in the case of the necessitive interpretation, we do not take the perspective of the agent into account.

How can we derive the impossibility interpretation from the meaning of the construction? We start out from the meaning given earlier, and specify it with a context (Figure 4.15).

Figure 4.15

---

**x is the recipient of a situation type Y, i.e. Y is not initiated by x**

+ *semantic-syntactic features*:

- (i) Y is negated.
- (ii) Y is prototypically perfective.
- (iii) x is animate or inanimate; if x is inanimate an intention to reach the resultative situation of Y can be ascribed to people associated with x.
- (iv) x is expressed in the dative, or if not expressed interpretable as a generic agent
- (v) The auxiliary is mostly not expressed.
- (vi) The word order is prototypically [dative infinitive], but a reverse order occurs as well.

*Interpretation:*

The subject can be interpreted as a recipient because he intends to realize the action (which is underlined by the perfective aspect), but is blocked in his intention, i.e. he is the recipient of state not Y:

**The agent (expressed in the dative form) has the intention to realize the infinitive action Y, but is blocked by particular circumstances, which means that the dative participant is the recipient of the state ‘not Y’, i.e. the agent cannot do/will not/does not succeed in doing action Y.**

---

Below I will discuss the contexts as in Figure 4.15 in more detail:

## (i) The negation in the case of impossibility

The impossibility interpretation occurs in so-called *negative* contexts.<sup>108</sup> In the case of the infinitive two main types of negation can be distinguished:

- Cases where an action (expressed by the infinitive) is fully negated.
- Cases where an action is partly negated; these cases amount to possibility with a clear reference to a possible failure.

Under full negation we can classify cases with *ne* ('not'), negative concord forms like *nikogda* ('never'), *nichego* ('nothing'), and the negative construction [*ni ... ni*]. ('neither ... nor'). Under partial negation we can classify sentences with *edva (li)* ('hardly'/'almost not')<sup>109</sup> and *vrjad (li)* ('probably not'); such sentences express that there is a situation close to the non-occurrence of the situation:

- (214) Ulicy takie uzkie, chto edva razminut'sja dvum mashinam. (*Russkaja Grammatika*, 1980, II: 374)  
streets so small, that hardly overtake-INF-PERF two-DAT cars-DAT  
'The streets are so narrow that two cars can hardly overtake.'
- (215) Mne zabyt' tvoi glaza edva li.<sup>110</sup> (Song text, twentieth century)  
I-DAT forget-INF-PERF your eyes hardly  
'I can hardly forget your eyes.'
- (216) Izvinite mne moi voprosy, ska<zal> Isp<anec>, – no vrjad li mne najti v drugoj raz udovletvoritel'nyx otvetov. (Vinogradov & Shvedova, 1964: 347/ Pushkin)  
forgive me my questions, said spaniard, – but probably.not I-DAT find-INF-PERF in another time satisfactory answers

---

<sup>108</sup> In logically oriented literature, negative contexts are sometimes described in terms of particular logical properties that they share, e.g. in terms of *monotonicity* (see Van der Wouden, 1994). The term 'monotonicity' concerns patterns of inference; in the case of monotonicity one can speak of stability of semantic information or truth-value under change of context. Van der Wouden (1994) argues that operators such as 'hardly' can be seen as a monotone-decreasing operators. This means that this operator allows reasoning from sets to subsets. Negation is a typical monotone-decreasing operator. As such, 'hardly' shares features with negation.

<sup>109</sup> Note that a similar interpretation can occur with *edva* and the past tense: *Bednaja mat' edva otodrara menja ot pomeschavshbegosja etogo cheloveka* ('My poor mother could hardly free me from the embrace of that man').

<sup>110</sup> <http://math.ucsd.edu/~broido/lyr/T9/T9.32.lat.html>

“Forgive me my questions”, said the Spaniard, “but another time I will probably not be able to find satisfactory answers.”

- (217) My daleko zashli i vyxod vrjad li nam najti.<sup>111</sup> (Kuz'min)  
we far came and exit probably.not we-DAT find-INF-PERF  
'We have come a long way, and will probably not find the exit/ succeed in finding the exit.'

Negative contexts constituted by *edva* and *vrjad li* differ from contexts such as *tol'ko* ('only') because in the case of *tol'ko* the negation is applied to a presupposition or implication (only x can do Y, presupposes or implies that others cannot do Y). In the case of these operators, the negation is not presupposed or implied, but rather contained in the expression (almost/ probably (Y)). Because of this, I will discuss sentences with *tol'ko* under cases of possibility. Sentences with *edva* and *vrjad li* are rather infrequent in modern standard Russian; in most cases a construction with a modal form (*udat'sja, uspet', smoch', možhno, sumet'*) is preferred.

(ii) The aspect of the infinitive

In the case of the impossibility interpretation of the DI-construction, the infinitive normally has the *perfective* aspect, which expresses the intention of the agent to realize the infinitive situation, that is, reach the natural or imposed end point (*telos*) of the situation. In the case of the construction under discussion we start out from the contradicting initial information state where the dative participant realizes the infinitive situation, and express that this scene will not occur. By initiating the situation 'not Y' the external force blocks the result of the situation intended by the potential agent.

The perfective aspect, it should be noted, is not a necessary feature of the impossibility interpretation. In the case of verbs that indicating actions that have no natural end point we find the imperfective aspect:

- (218) Tam **tebe** ne **guljat'**: vysokij sneg. (Maurice, 1995: 152)  
there you-DAT not walk-INF-IMPERF: high snow  
'You can't walk there: the snow is too high.'
- (219) Konečno, **Smirnovu** kak kamen'shchiku s Pashej ne **tjagat'sja**. (Proeme, *forthcoming*, V. Belov, *Vospitanie po doktoru Spoku*)

---

<sup>111</sup> <http://www.relex.ru:8040/~kuzmin/songs/din82/beda.txt>

of.course, Smirnov-DAT as mason with Pasha not compete-INF-IMPERF  
 ‘Of course, as a mason, Smirnov can’t compete with Pasha.’

In these sentences the idea of not *succeeding* is less strongly expressed, but it is expressed that the dative participant is *not in the position* to realize the infinitive situation.

(iii-iv) The nature of the dative participant

The dative subject can refer to an animate entity, or an inanimate entity, e.g.:

- (220) Boloto? – sprosil Morgan. – A obojti ego možno? – Možno, no togda vy ne popadete v Dzhassu. Po èтому puti nikto ne xodit, tak kak **karavanam** s gruzom zdes’ ne **projti**.<sup>112</sup> (K. Kurtc, *Vlastitel’ derini*)  
 marshland? – asked Morgan. – but go.around him may? – may, but then you not end.up in Dzhassa. by.this road no-one not goes, because caravans-DAT with.goods here not pass-INF-PERF  
 ‘Marshland? – asked Morgan. – But can you go around it? – You can, but then you don’t end up in Dzhassa. No-one takes that road, because caravans with goods can’t pass here.’

In such sentences one can speak of personification because the people leading the caravans are identified with the caravan.

In some cases one finds a negated perfective infinitive in sentences without a dative subject. Such sentences express that there is no agent that can reach the telos of the infinitive situation, or put differently, no agent *can* realize the infinitive situation, e.g.:

- (221) To, chto menja vyvelo iz ravnovesija, naxodilos’ v odnoj komnate so mnoj – èto vygljadelo ... nu dazhe ne **opisat’** (...).<sup>113</sup>  
 that, what me brought.out of balance, was.present in one room with me – that looked.like ... well even not describe-INF-PERF  
 ‘The thing that brought me out of balance was in the same room with me, it looked like, well, you can’t even describe it.’
- (222) Vam ponachalu pridetsja prignut’sja, inache zdes’ ne **projti**, no èto nichego!<sup>114</sup> (R. Fejst, *Vrata vojny*)

<sup>112</sup> <http://www.atlant.ru:8070/library/kurtc/Ruler/37.htm>

<sup>113</sup> <http://www.russian-club.com/COMMENTS/letter81-comments.html>

<sup>114</sup> <http://lib.nordnet.ru/lat/FEIST/appret.txt>

*Meaning and interpretation of the DI-construction*

you first.of.all will.have.to jump, otherwise here not pass-INF-PERF, but that nothing  
'First of all you will have to jump, otherwise it's impossible to pass here, but it is very  
easy.'

(v) Auxiliary

The auxiliary *bylo* is expressed in some instances of the construction under discussion:

- (223) Zaplatkina **bylo** uzhe ne **vernut'**. (Uppsala corpus)  
Zaplatkin-ACC was-NEUT already not get.back-INF-PERF  
'One couldn't bring Zaplatkin back any more [he was dead].'
- (224) Skol'ko my ni vgljadyvalis' v binokli, nikak ne **ugadat' bylo**, chto zhe èto takoe. (*Russkaja Grammatika*, 1980, II: 376/ Ju. Kazakov)  
how.much we not looked through binoculars, never not guess-INF-PERF, what PRT that  
such  
'No matter how much we looked through the binoculars, we couldn't find out what was  
going on there.'

In these sentences no dative is expressed; a dative is also absent in the examples given by the *Russkaja Grammatika* (1980, II: 376). I suspect that the expression of *bylo* is less restricted with sentences without dative (cf. 4.5.2 for the relation between verbalness and the expression of the dative with modal adverbs).

In some cases the auxiliary *budet* is expressed, e.g.:

- (225) On na sebja do smerti slavushku nadel, **emu** ne **otmyt' ee budet**. (*Russkaja Grammatika*, 1980, II: 376/ Rasp.)  
he on him till death ill.fame put.on, he-DAT not wash.off-INF-PERF her will.be  
'He will have ill fame until his death, he won't be able to wash it away.'
- (226) A esli ty bespokoishs'ja, chto **Maku** odnomu vsej nas **budet** ne **vytashchit'**, – po-  
prezhnemu lenivo progovorila Ordi, gljadja na boloto, – tak ty ne zabyvaj, chto tashchit'  
emu pridetsja odnogo, ot sily dvux, a on mal'chik sil'nyj. (B. & A. Strugackie, *Ostrov*)  
(...), that Mak-DAT alone-DAT all of.us will not pull.out-INF-PERF (...)  
'If you're worried whether Mak will be able to drag us all out by himself, said Ordi lazily,  
looking at the swamp, then keep in mind that he has to drag out alone only me, with at  
most two persons, and he is a strong boy.'

In these sentences the function of *budet* is to stress the future character (the action will take place in the future) of the scene. For a further discussion of the expression of the auxiliary, see 4.9.

(vi) Word order

The word order of most uses is [dative infinitive]. The *Russkaja Grammatika* (1980, II: 378) notes that it is possible to place the infinitive at the first position in the clause in a rheme position, e.g. (with my accentuation):

- (227) Kakaja ni est' – ne **zabýt'** mne ee. (J. Mamleev, *Son v lesu*)  
 which not is – not forget-INF-PERF I-DAT her  
 'No matter who she is, I won't forget her.'
- (228) Ne **projtí** mal'chiku po ètoj doroge! (*Russkaja Grammatika*, 1980, II: 378)  
 not pass-INF-PERF boy-DAT by that road  
 'The boy can't pass by that road.'
- (229) Tol'ko vidit Volod'ka – ne **razobráť** emu, gde ego molodaja zhená.  
 just sees Volod'ka – not find.out-INF-PERF he-DAT, where his young wife  
 'Volod'ka just sees that – he can't find out where his young wife is.'

According to the *Russkaja Grammatika*, such sentences have an 'expressive' character. In my opinion, this expressive character must be related to the specific information structure of the sentence and the argumentative function of the infinitive sentence in the discourse where it occurs.

In all three of these sentences the information expressed by the infinitive sentence is closely connected to the information expressed in the previous discourse.<sup>115</sup> The function of the word order in this case is reminiscent of the function of *SV* order remarked by Bonnot & Fougeron (1982: 313, 320) for nominative subjects. They argue that *SV* order serves as an explicit mark of the dependence on the preceding context; in the case of *SV* order this specific marking is absent. Kompeer (1992: 218, 219) reformulates this description by stating that *SV* order tends to refer to an event or situation as a fact present at a given moment. For the *VS* order here a similar analysis can possibly be given.

---

<sup>115</sup> In Dutch this can be made visible by the use of particles such as *toch*.

I suspect that in these expressions the identity of the subject is already given in the discourse, and functions as an addition to the information expressed by the accented infinitive. The accent on the infinitive expresses that the presupposition that the infinitive might not be the case is contradicted. The emphasis on the existence of the situation expressed by the infinitive would not occur in the case of VS order, since this is the neutral arrangement for the expression of a scene where the dative subject is the recipient of a situation. In the case of VS order the identity of S is not relevant because it is already given; this presupposes a strong informational tie with the preceding discourse. The accent on the infinitive serves as a marker that the infinitive situation *does* exist (or not exist in the case of negation).

#### **4.10.2 ‘Possibility’ and related cases**

The dative-infinitive construction with a possibility interpretation occurs without restriction in the case of interrogative sentences, and in the case of non-interrogative sentences only in special contexts, viz. contexts that provide ‘deblocking’: contrastive sentences, sentences with *tol’ko*, sentences with *chtoby*, and sentences with *∞ot*; in (6) above, an example of a contrastive context was given.

The interpretation of the DI-construction as a case of possibility is peripheral not only in the sense that it occurs in special contexts only, but also in the sense that such uses with special contexts do not occur frequently in modern standard Russian (Timofeev, 1950: 281; Bricyn, 1990: 230). Furthermore, in many cases neutralization can be perceived between cases that express possibility and cases that have a necessitive ontic nature. Before giving my analysis of the possibility interpretation of the dative-infinitive construction, then, I should make a few remarks about the status of the data on which my analysis is based.

There are two problematic aspects connected with my analysis of the possibility interpretation of the DI-construction. The first problem concerns the set of data on which my analysis is based. These data are mostly examples taken from the linguistic literature on infinitive sentences, with some data collected from corpora, or from the Internet. Because the amount of data I have at my disposal is relatively small, it is difficult to make and test hypotheses about them. The second problem is that the data I have collected are often examples from the nineteenth century, or twentieth-century phrases from poetic texts or fragments with a colloquial or *‘skaz’* character. It could be said that these sentences are typical of nineteenth century Russian, or modern Russian with archaic features (poetry, *skaz*), and cannot be analyzed as part of the twentieth-century Russian

language system. If this is the case, an explanation must be given as to (i) why and how the system has changed and (ii) why the sentences given in the literature all occur in specific contexts only.

Data from historical grammars (Vinogradov & Shvedova, 1964: 336; Borkovskij, 1978: 278–282; Nikiforov, 1952) show that the specific use of the dative-infinitive construction has changed in some respects, perhaps partly due to change of oppositional forms and due to change of the meaning of the constituents (for example the function of *byt'*). Vaulina (1988: 135), however, concludes in her study of the evolution of modal expressions in Russian from the eleventh to the seventeenth century, that infinitive sentences preserve a relative stability in the course of the studied period, and occupy a rather peripheral position in the system of modal expressions. From her discussion of the use of the DI-construction as a way to express (im)possibility, we can conclude that there are no major differences from the current contexts for possibility. Like in modern Russian the DI-construction expresses impossibility rather than possibility (see Vaulina, 1988: 53). A difference from modern Russian is that in older stages of Russian the DI-construction was freely used to express possibility with verbs that express 'to see' such as *viděti*, *zrěti* (see Borkovskij, 1978: 280). In modern Russian, such constructions with a dative are archaic; a modern way to express similar notions is a construction with an adverbial predicate (e.g. *vidno*). Borkovskij (1978: 280) writes that the same modal meaning was sometimes also expressed with other verbs; the examples he gives, however, all have an ontic character, and might be seen as examples of 'necessity'. Another difference from modern Russian is that in older stages of Russian, the infinitive was used in sentences without a dative to express so-called 'permanent possibility' (Vinogradov & Shvedova, 1964: 337; e.g. *da v nem zhe kupiti ljudi chernye*; 'there one can buy black people.'). In modern Russian such cases must be paraphrased with the adverbial predicate *mozžno*. Because of the absence of a dative, these cases cannot be seen as instances of the DI-construction. I will discuss such cases in 4.11.3.

Since I have seen no good indication that one can only account for the occurrence of the possibility interpretation of the DI-construction by looking at a diachronic change, I will assume that the sentences under discussion are all interpretable by modern Russians and can be seen as part of the modern Russian language system.<sup>116</sup>

How can we derive the possibility interpretation from the meaning of the construction? We start out from the meaning given earlier, and specify it with a context (Figure 4.16).

---

<sup>116</sup> Whether the interpretations of possibility are part of modern Russian or not, an explanation must still be given as to why they occur in specific contexts only.

Figure 4.16

---

**x is the recipient of a situation type Y; i.e. Y is not initiated by x**

+ *context*:

- (i) Y can be interpreted as being ‘deblocked’.
- (ii) Y is prototypically perfective.
- (iii) x is animate or inanimate; if x is inanimate an intention to perform Y can be ascribed to x.
- (iv) x is expressed in the dative, or if not expressed interpretable as a generic agent.
- (v) The auxiliary is mostly not expressed.

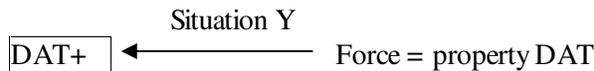
*Interpretation*:

**The agent x (expressed in the dative form) who was initially blocked in the realization of the intended action Y, can realize the action Y because the blockage is removed, or because the potential blocking is absent.**

---

The possibility interpretation is represented in Figure 4.17.

Figure 4.17



If the agent is a recipient of a situation type Y, one can only speak of ‘possible Y’ if an intention to do a situation is ascribed to the agent, but ‘not possible Y’ is initially the case or to be expected, and the external force can be seen as an ‘enabling’ force that initiates the intended situation. About such cases two important points have to be noted.

Firstly, it must be remarked that the notion of *deblocking* of the intended situation differs from the possibility of *can*, since the notion of deblocking in the case of the DI-construction must be in accordance with the idea of recipienthood. A sentence like the following is not possible:

- (230) \*Ivanu reshít’ ètu zadachu.  
Ivan-DAT solve-INF-PERF that problem.  
meaning: ‘Ivan can solve that problem.’

The marginal status of the possibility interpretation of the DI-construction is connected with the specific meaning of the construction. The meaning of ‘recipient of a situation type’ is not easily combined with the idea of possibility. To be interpreted as such, it needs a specific context. The contexts in which the possibility interpretation occur are partly contexts that are typical of negative polarity items (*tol’ko*) and partly not (e.g. *chtoby*).

Secondly, the notion of deblocking must in all non-interrogative cases, except sentences with *chtoby*, be identified with what I call ‘epistemic’ deblocking. In the case of epistemic deblocking, the unblocking has nothing to do with the initial presence of a physical barrier blocking the intended action of the participant, and the removal of this barrier, but must be identified with blocking in the domain of presupposition. This means that there is some presupposition that the dative subject is not the recipient of the infinitive action, but this presupposition is contradicted. The exact nature of this blocking will be discussed below, when I will analyze the different contexts for possibility in more detail.

#### 4.10.2.1 Perfective infinitives in a contrastive context

Mets (1985: 205) claims that a possibility interpretation can occur in contrastive sentences which express that agent *x* is the recipient of a situation *Y*, and agent *x’* is not. An example of such a case was given in (6), and another example is given below:

- (231) **Vam, synam Zemli, kogda-nibud’ razgadat’ zagadku.** No ne nam. (Mets, 1985: 387/ A.Tolstoj)  
 you-DAT, sons-DAT of.Earth, one.day solve-INF-PERF mystery. But not we-DAT  
 ‘You, sons of the Earth, will one day solve/ be able to solve the mystery. But we will not.’

Note that sentences like these have an *ontic* character; this is especially clear in sentence (231); this sentence can be interpreted both to indicate that the infinitive situation will occur in the future, and to indicate that the agent will have the ability to realize the situation.<sup>117</sup>

---

<sup>117</sup> Note that Bricyn (1990: 225) classifies the following sentence (119) with a verb of motion as a case of what I call epistemic-ontic necessity: *Ètim rebjatom ezdit’/Oni po prirode ezdoznye/ /A ej/ ona nikogda ne smozhet sama sest’ za ml’.* (Bricyn, 1990: 225). The differences in classification point at the fact that all uses have the same meaning and that the different uses must be seen as interpretations. These different interpretations cannot be classified as clear cases of either necessity or possibility.

How can we explain why the DI-construction can be used to express possibility in contexts like these? It may be argued that contrastive contexts allow for the possibility reading because they trigger an ‘epistemic deblocking’; contradiction/ negating of a presupposition can be seen as a weak form of deblocking.

In the case of these sentences there is a presupposition, based on the contrasted situation, that the situation will not occur. The occurrence of the dative subject can thus be explained because we focus on the fact that the subject is the recipient of a situation, by placing it under the presupposition that the subject has an intention to initiate the action, *but is blocked from doing so*. This ontic deblocking can be compared to cases that express ontic necessity, like *Emu chítát’ knigu* (‘he WILL read the book.’). In these sentences the speaker negates the presupposition that the agent will not read the book, and expresses that the infinitive action will necessarily be the case. The sentences under discussion here differ from these sentences in that an *intention* is ascribed to the subject to initiate the situation, which leads to the interpretation of ‘possibility’; in these sentences the external force can be identified with something like the capacities of the dative subject. Note that this does not mean that the dative participant actually wants to realize the action; in (6) it is only expressed that *if* the dative participant wants to realize the action, he can do it.

#### 4.10.2.2. Sentences with *tol’ko*

A possibility interpretation can occur in the case of sentences with *tol’ko* (‘only’). In these two sentences *tol’ko* modifies the dative:

- (232) A i tol’ko v vyrezy **murashu projti** (Maurice, 1995: 151/ *Byliny*)  
but and only in hole ant-DAT go.through-INF-PERF  
‘But only an ant can go through such holes.’
- (233) Nesmetnyj mir semenit v mesmerizme, I tol’ko vetru **svjazat’**. (Bricyn, 1990: 230/ B. Pasternak)  
countless world minces in mesmerism, and only wind-DAT tie-INF-PERF  
‘The uncountable world minces in the mesmerism, and only the wind can tie it up.’

Sentences with *tol’ko* and a possibility interpretation can be analyzed as follows. In (232) it is expressed that because of its particular qualities (for example its small size), it is possible only for an ant to realize the infinitive situation. In (233) a similar interpretation occurs. Note that we find the perfective aspect, which is typical of the

possibility interpretation. The perfective aspect emphasizes the success in reaching the telos of the infinitive situation. In this case the dative participant is an inanimate entity; this means that we ascribe a tendency to the wind to realize the infinitive situation (that is, the wind is seen as being directed at the realization of the infinitive situation).

In the sentences under discussion one can speak of *debloccking* because the possibility of realization of the situation by the dative subject is contrasted with the impossibility of the same situation in a presuppositional world. The contrast with those cases where the agent cannot be seen as the recipient of the situation triggers the ‘possibility’ interpretation; in these sentences the contrast with the non-recipienthood of the other agents triggers the expression of the dative. As such, this case can be compared to a case of epistemic deblocking as discussed above.<sup>118</sup>

It must be noted that sentences with a possibility interpretation and *tol’ko* are infrequent in modern standard Russian, and occur in language with archaic features such as *skaz* or poetry. In modern standard Russian modal infinitive sentences with *tol’ko* with a possibility reading occur mostly in sentences without dative where the agent of the infinitive is understood as a generic subject (‘one’), and where, consequently, *tol’ko* does not modify the dative. I will discuss these sentences below in 4.10.2.6.

The DI-construction with *tol’ko* also occurs with imperfective verbs:

*tol’ko* modifies the place specification of the infinitive:

- (234) I ty nazyvaesh’ èto – Muzykoj?, nezhidanno zlo zasmejas’ Feja. Nechego skazat’, Tvorec! Da **tebe** tol’ko na bazare **igrat’!** (T. Konstantinov; *Grustnye skazki o ljubvi*)  
and you call that – music?, unexpectedly mean laughed Feja. nothing say creator. PRT  
you-DAT only on market play-INF-IMPERF  
“‘And you call that music?’, laughed Feja unexpectedly mean. “‘And that calls itself a creator! The only place where you can / will play is the market!’”

*tol’ko* modifies the time specification of the infinitive:

- (235) Za dver’ju strogij nadziratel’/ Prislonivshis’ u tolchka stoit/ On odin, odin lish’ tol’ko znaet/ Parnju do rassveta **tol’ko zhit’**<sup>119</sup> (Songtext)

<sup>118</sup> Note that the operator *tol’ko* can also trigger a possibility reading in the case of the perfective present, e.g. *Tol’ko russkij nacionalizm spaset Rossiju, a vlast’ segodnja ne u pravitel’stva.* (lit. ‘only the Russian nationalism will save Russia and the government doesn’t have the power.’)

<sup>119</sup> <http://math.ucsd.edu/~broido/lyr/I5/I5.02.lat.html>

behind door severe supervisor/ Leaning.against at loo/ he alone, alone just only knows/ man-DAT till dawn only live-INF-IMPERF  
'Behind the door the severe supervisor/ Leaning at the door of the loo/ He alone knows/ That the boy will only live till dawn.'

*tol'ko* modifies the dative:

- (236) Ivan-carevich perelez v krepost', tam vse storozha spali, zashel na konjushnju, pojmal konja zlatogrivogo, da pozarilsja na uzdechku – ona zolotom, dorigimi kamnjami ubrana; v nej zlatogrivomu konju tol'ko guljat'. (*Byliny*)  
Ivan-prince climbed in castle, there all guards slept, went to equarry, took horse with.golden.manes, and set.his.eyes.on bridle – she with.gold, with.valuable stones decorated, in her with.the.golden.manes-DAT horse-DAT only go-INF  
'Prince Ivan climbed into the castle, there all the guards were sleeping, he went to the equarry, took the horse with the golden mane, and looked at the bridle, it was gold and decorated with precious stones, only the horse with the golden mane could go in it [was good enough to go in it].'

In (234) it is expressed that because of his bad musical abilities, the only place for the agent to play his music is the market. In this sentence we find an epistemic-ontic nuance; this character is connected to the conditioned character of the occurrence of the action in this sentence, viz. if people play that bad, the only place for them to play is the market. In this sentence the external force can be identified both with the internal abilities of the dative subject and with a general law or script. In (235) the ontic character is even stronger. This sentence conveys that the way things go is such that the dative participant will only live till dawn. Sentence (236) conveys that it is appropriate only for the dative participant, and not for anyone else, to realize the infinitive situation.

For sentences like these, the occurrence of the dative can be explained by pointing at their epistemic-ontic character: they express that because of the abilities of the dative subject, or the situation in which the dative subject is, the realization of the infinitive action is necessarily the case.

Besides the occurrence of *tol'ko* in sentences that express 'possibility' or ontic necessity, sentences with *tol'ko* and an infinitive can also be interpreted as cases of wish. In this construction *tol'ko* modifies the infinitive situation. Consider the following sentences, given by Veyrenc (1979: 54), where the speaker can be identified with the potential agent of the infinitive:

- (237) **Mne tol'ko byt' na tvoem meste!**  
 I-DAT only be-INF on your place  
 'If only I could be in your shoes.'
- (238) **Mne tol'ko eshche raz uvidet' ee!**  
 I-DAT only still time see-INF-PERF her  
 'If only I could see her one more time.'

Veyrenc (1979: 54) claims that these sentences express possibility; however, this claim is based solely on the possibility of translating these sentences in French with the form *pouvoir* ('can'). I do not think one can say that the construction expresses possibility, but rather that the relation of the sentences (237)–(238) and sentences that express possibility can be motivated as follows. In the case of (237)–(238) the speaker intends to realize the infinitive situation, but in the real world this situation does not take place. By using the DI-construction with *tol'ko*, the speaker expresses that he is focused on just one thing, and that is the future realization of the infinitive situation. As such, the speaker is focused on the deblocking of the realization of the infinitive situation in some hypothetical world. This construction can also occur without expressed potential agent, e.g. *tol'ko eshche raz uvidet' ee!*; in such sentences the speaker is identified with the potential agent.<sup>120</sup>

If the dative subject cannot be identified with the speaker, a paraphrase with a form expressing possibility is not possible, e.g.:

- (239) **Vam tol'ko vlyubljat'sja, da kak by zamuzh vyjti za blagorodnogo, chtob barynej byt'!**  
 (Bricyn, 1990: 241/ A. Ostrovskij)  
 you-DAT only fall.in.love-INF-IMPERF, and how IRR marry to nobleman, in.order. lady  
 be-INF  
 'The only thing you want is to fall in love, marry a nobleman and become a lady.'

Sentences with *tol'ko* and an imperfective or perfective infinitive are interpreted as cases of wish, where an intention can be ascribed to the dative subject to realize the infinitive action, and the dative participant can be identified with the force.

In sum: the DI-construction with *tol'ko* can be interpreted differently, depending on the context in which it occurs. The three basic uses of *tol'ko* can be schematized as in Table 4.3:

---

<sup>120</sup> According to informants expression of the particle *by* in (237–238) would make this sentence more acceptable. Furthermore, they remarked that this sentence could, with the right intonation and context, also be interpreted as a case of restricted possibility.

Table 4.3. The DI-construction with *tol'ko*

|                              | Necessity              | Possibility            | Wish           |
|------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|----------------|
| <i>tol'ko</i> modifies       | no restriction         | dative <sup>121</sup>  | infinitive     |
| Intention DAT to realize INF | –                      | +                      | +              |
| Force                        | law, script (external) | ability DAT (internal) | DAT (internal) |

Note that some sentences can be classified both as cases of ontic necessity, and as cases of possibility; in such cases the parameters of both necessity and possibility can be applied to the sentence in question. The occurrence of the possibility interpretation can be explained by the fact that the recipienthood of the infinitive agent is emphasized by contrasting it with other agents that cannot be seen as recipients. This contrasting can be seen as deblocking, and triggers the possibility interpretation in those cases where an intention can be ascribed to the dative subject to realize the infinitive situation.

#### 4.10.2.3 Sentences with *xot'*

Veyrenc (1979: 54) argues that the following use of the DI-construction, where the particle *xot'* ('even', 'almost') modifies the infinitive VP, can be seen as a case of possibility:

- (240) Mavre bylo vse ravno. Ej xot' sejchas s tatarinom li, s zhidom li povenchat'sja, ...  
 (Mel'nikov)  
 Mavra dvas all the.same. she-DAT even now with Tartar PRT, with Jew PRT marry-  
 INF-PERF  
 'Mavra didn't care anymore. Now she could/ would even marry a Tartar or a Jew.'

Similar sentences cannot always be translated with modal predicates that express possibility, compare:

<sup>121</sup> I suspect that *tol'ko* may also modify other constituents, but I have not attested examples of such cases.

- (241) **Aleksandru xot' skvoz' zemlju provalit'sja.** (Vinogradov & Shvedova, 1964: 347/ Goncharov)  
 Alexandr-DAT even through ground disappear-INF-PERF  
 'Alexander almost felt like vanishing from the face of the earth.'

In this sentence the DI-construction can be paraphrased with *gotov byl* ('was ready'), *v poru* ('time to').

The claim that (240) must be seen as a case of possibility is based solely on the possibility of translating this sentence in French with *pouvoir* ('can'). In my opinion, it is incorrect to speak of possibility, but rather the relation between this sentence and sentences that express possibility can be elucidated as follows. Sentence (240) expresses that because of some particular emotional state (*use ravno*), the participant expressed in the dative is in the position to realize a situation that would, under normal circumstances, be the least expected situation to be realized. As such, the emotional state can be seen as the external force that creates the possibility for the least expected situation to occur. Note that in this case we find the perfective aspect, which is typical of those cases where an intention is ascribed to the dative subject to realize the infinitive situation.

It seems that the particle *xot'* ('even'), or similar particles, are necessary components of sentences like these. A similar context is given below, where we find the form *i* ('and'/ 'even'), which modifies the object of the infinitive:

- (242) **Vam zabyt' i granicu Versalja na bortu samoleta-kovra.** (Bricyn, 1990: 230/ V. Majakovskij).  
 you-DAT forget-INF-PERF and border of.Versailles on board of.the.flying.carpet  
 'You [=youth] can/ will even forget the border of Versailles, on board the flying carpet.'

It seems that the occurrence of the possibility interpretation in this sentence can be related to the occurrence of *i* ('even'). The forms *i* and *xot'* both express in the DI-construction that of all the actions that are to be expected, the infinitive action ('forget the border of Versailles', 'marry a Jew or a Tartar') is the least expected. In other words: there is an expectation that something is not the case but this presupposition is negated and it is stated that because of the particular circumstances the least expected is the case. For the occurrence of the dative one can perhaps give a similar explanation to that for the contexts discussed above. The negation of the presupposition that something will not be the case emphasizes the recipienthood of the subject. Hence the occurrence of the dative in sentences with a perfective infinitive.

The infinitive with the particle *xot'* also occurs in sentences without dative, such as in the sentences below, which have a directive or permissive character:

- (243) I èxo vsled kukuet tozhe. Nakukovali nam tosku! Xot' **ubezhat'**. Izbav' nas, bozhe, / Ot èlegicheskix ku-ku. (*Russkaja Grammatika*, 1980, II: 373/ Pushkin)  
and echo after cuckoos also they.cuckooed we-DAT melancholy-ACC. even run-INF-PERF deliver us, god/ from elegiac cuckoo  
'And the echo cuckoos after us. The cuckooing made us melancholic. It would be better to/ one should/ one would almost run away. Deliver us O God, from the elegiac cuckooing.'
- (244) Odezhu samuju luchshuju dam: cherkesku, i sapogi, xot' **zhenit'sja**. (Timofeev, 1950: 281/ L. Tolstoj)  
(...), almost marry-INF-IMPERF  
'I give you the best clothing: a Circassian coat, boots, you could almost marry.'

In the first sentence no intention to realize the infinitive action is ascribed to the non-specified agent, hence the necessitive interpretation. In the second sentence an intention can be ascribed to the contextually given infinitive agent (the addressee) to realize the infinitive action, hence the possibility interpretation. In both cases the modal interpretation is closely related to the directive meaning of this construction, which is underlined by the possibility of paraphrasing these sentences with an imperative (*xot' ubegi*, *xot' zhenis'*). In modern Russian, the construction with the infinitive + *xot'* expressing permission is not frequently used; instead the construction with the imperative is used (see 3.2).

The particle *xot'* also occurs in sentences that express a wish or desire, such as in the following sentence, where *xot'* modifies the specification of time of the infinitive:

- (245) A mne xot' raz v godu **vzgljanut'**/ A mne xot' raz v godu **shagnut'**/ Na ètu tesnuju, drozhashchuju ploshchadku (...).<sup>122</sup> (Song text, V. Luferov)  
but I-DAT even once in year look-INF-PERF; but I-DAT even once in year walk-INF-PERF/ on that narrow, shivering ground  
'I would like to look just once a year/I would like to step just once a year/ On that narrow shivering ground.'

---

<sup>122</sup> <http://lib.nordnet.ru/lat/KSP/luferow.txt>

In this sentence the speaker expresses his desire to realize the infinitive situation, even if he could do it just once a year. I have only seen examples of such sentences with a first person singular. For such sentences two analyses could apply: (a) the external force can be identified with the dative subject, and an intention to realize the infinitive action can be ascribed to the dative subject; (b) the blocking force is counterfactually overcome (deblocked) by the dative subject. Which interpretation is at stake here? In my opinion, this question cannot be answered. Such sentences can be seen as borderline cases between blocking and deblocking.

To recapitulate my main point: the DI-construction with *∞ot'* can be interpreted differently, depending on the context in which it occurs. The occurrence of the dative in the case of the 'possibility' interpretation can be motivated by the epistemic deblocking that is facilitated by the meaning of *∞ot'*. The basic interpretational possibilities of sentences with *∞ot'* can be represented for sentences with and without dative respectively as in Table 4.4 and Table 4.5.

Table 4.4. The DI-construction with *∞ot'*

|                              | Possibility  | Wish of deblocking                             |
|------------------------------|--------------|--|
| Intention DAT to realize INF | +            | +  |
| Force                        | property DAT | speaker/ external force that blocks the action |
| Identity DAT                 | 1/ 2/ 3      | speaker/ ontic force                           |

Table 4.5 Infinitive sentences without dative with *∞ot'*

|   | Possibility                 | Necessity                   |
|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Intention infinitive agent to realize Inf | +                           | –                           |
| Infinitive agent                          | Generic agent; Addressee    | Generic agent; Addressee    |
| EF  | Contextually given; Speaker | Contextually given; Speaker |

The occurrence of the possibility interpretation can be motivated by the fact that the recipienthood of the infinitive agent is emphasized by contrasting it with the expected situation; in the case of *not'* it is expressed that the dative subject is the recipient of the least expected situation. This contrasting can be seen as epistemic deblocking, and triggers the possibility interpretation in those cases where an intention can be ascribed to the dative subject to realize the infinitive situation.

#### 4.10.2.4 Sentences with a possibility interpretation in interrogatives

As I discussed above in 4.9.1, the DI-construction also occurs in interrogative sentences with interrogative adverbs. A possibility interpretation occurs in the case of the perfective aspect, such as the following:

- (246) Kak **mne uexat'** s det'mi v Shtaty?<sup>123</sup>  
how I-DAT leave.for-INF-PERF with children in USA  
'How can I travel to the USA with children?'

In my opinion one can speak of deblocking in such cases as well. In the case of questions like in (246), the speaker has an intention to perform the infinitive action but cannot realize the action, in other words, he is blocked from realizing the intended action. By asking the question the speaker asks the hearer how the blocking can be unblocked, or put differently, how he can realize the action. As such, questions like these can be seen as cases of deblocking.<sup>124</sup>

#### 4.10.2.5 Sentences with a 'possibility' interpretation and *chtoby*

The DI-construction can be interpreted as a case of 'possibility' in some contexts with *chtoby* ('in order'). I will discuss the different uses of the DI-construction with subordinators separately below in 4.11. Here, I will confine myself to briefly discussing the uses of this construction that might be classified as cases of possibility.

---

<sup>123</sup> [http://immigration.andrewz.org:8105/boards/topic\\_us\\_visa\\_embassy/messages/96.html](http://immigration.andrewz.org:8105/boards/topic_us_visa_embassy/messages/96.html)

<sup>124</sup> Besides regular questions, the infinitive also occurs in rhetorical questions. In the case of the infinitive construction these are questions where there is an anticipated answer, which is negative. Veyrenc (1979: 57) claims that in the case of rhetorical questions one has to speak of impossibility. His argumentation is based on the translation of infinitive rhetorical questions in French with *pouvoir*, in contrast to regular questions that are translated with *devoir*. It can be argued that one has to speak of impossibility in the case of such sentences because the anticipated answer to rhetorical questions like these is negative.

Garde (1963: 291) notes that the DI-construction can be used to express possibility in sentences with the conjunction of purpose *chtoby* ('in order to'). He gives the following example of such a sentence:

- (247) Polez zhilin v dyru, chtob i Kostylinu prolezt'. (Garde, 1963/ Tolstoj)  
 climbed Zhilin in hole, so.that and Kostylin-DAT pass.trough-INF-PERF  
 'Zhilin climbed into the hole, so that Kostylin could pass through as well.'

In the sentence given above, the subject of the matrix sentence is not co-referential with the subject of the complement sentence. In the following example, which has a clearer ontic character, the subjects of the two sentences are co-referential:

- (248) A chtob nam poprilichnej oder'sja./ My po novoj pojdem vorovat'.<sup>125</sup> (Song text from the film *Respublika Shkid*, 1966)  
 and in.order to we-DAT better dress-INF-PERF/ we again go steal-INF-IMPERF  
 'In order to dress ourselves better./ We go out stealing again.'

In both these sentences one can actually speak of the *deblocking* of an action: an action is performed in order to facilitate the occurrence of another action. In other words: there is a situation where the agent wants to realize the action, but is not in the position to do so, and a situation where the blockage is taken away, and the obstacles to realizing the action are overcome. Note that all cases with *chtoby* and a dative have a clear ontic nature; a paraphrase with modal predicates of possibility (*udast'sja*, *smoch'*, etc.) does not convey the actual meaning of the construction.

#### 4.10.2.6 Sentences without a dative subject that express possibility

The possibility interpretation occurs in some cases with infinitive sentences where no dative is expressed. Because of the absence of the dative subject, and the impossibility of inserting a dative subject in such sentences, these cases cannot be seen as uses of the DI-construction. I will, however, briefly discuss such sentences as well, since they are semantically related to the DI-construction.

Three groups of infinitive sentences without dative that express possibility can be distinguished: (i) sentences with *vidat'* (*shyxat'*), which have a strong phraseological

---

<sup>125</sup> <http://math.ucsd.edu/~broido/lyr/I1/I1.11p.lat.html>

character, (ii) sentences with *tol'ko*, and (iii) sentences without restrictive context. I will briefly discuss them below.

An example of a sentence with *vidat'* is given below:

- (249) Srazu **vidat'**, chto principial'nyj. (K. Paustovskij, *Nachalo nevedomogo veka*)  
immediate see-INF-IMPERF, that man.of.principle  
'You can see immediately that he is a man of principle.'

The construction with *vidat'* also occurs with negation:

- (250) Celi **bylo ne vidat'**.<sup>126</sup> (V. Pikul', *Rekviem karavanu PQ-17*)  
target-GEN was-NEUT not see-INF  
'The target wasn't visible.'

In older stages of Russian, sentences with *vidat'* (and *slyxat'*) also occurred with a dative, but in modern Russian this use has become obsolete. In modern Russian, *vidat'* can also function as a parenthetic word, expressing somethin like 'clearly':

- (251) Pomer, **vidat'**, ot natugi.<sup>127</sup> (J. Burkin & S. Luk'janenko, *Ostrov Rus'*)  
died, see-INF, from tension  
'He died, clearly, from tension/ effort/.'

Because of the phraseological character of sentences with *vidat'*, I will not discuss them here, but confine myself to the non-phraseological cases.

The infinitive predicate can occur with the form *tol'ko*, as in the following sentences, where *tol'ko* modifies a specification or argument of the infinitive:

- (252) Tol'ko s ptich'im shepetom i **sraVnit' bylo** zvonkij Polin golosok. (*Russkaja Grammatika*, 1980, II: 376/ Leon.)  
only with birds sound and compare-INF-PERF was-NEUTER clear of.Polin voice  
'You could only compare the clear voice of Polja with the singing of a bird.'
- (253) Vnov' vernutsja zhuravli. Tol'ko ix **vstrechat'** vesnoju.<sup>128</sup>  
again will.return cranes. just them meet-INF-IMPERF in.spring

---

<sup>126</sup> [http://lib.nordnet.ru/lat/PIKULX/req\\_pq17.txt](http://lib.nordnet.ru/lat/PIKULX/req_pq17.txt)

<sup>127</sup> <http://moshkow.relline.ru:5000/lat/LUKXQN/russ.txt>

<sup>128</sup> <http://math.ucsd.edu/~broido/lyr/L1/L1.40.lat.html>

‘Again the cranes will return. You can only meet them in spring.’

The expression of the restrictive form *tol’ko* may trigger a possibility interpretation because these can be seen as cases of partial negation (cf. the analysis of cases with a dative). Since no intention to realize the infinitive can be ascribed to a specific agent, but rather to a generic agent, sentences like these, in contrast to cases with a dative, do not express the idea of ‘succeeding’. As I mentioned above, cases without dative are less restricted than cases with a dative. This may be connected with the fact that in personal sentences, by using a form expressing possibility (*udat’sja, (s)moch’*), one can place more emphasis on the possibility. In the case of subjectless sentences, it may be that the ‘generic’ nature of the subject, and hence the general character of the proposition, are expressed by the infinitive construction, than by oppositional forms or constructions. It is possible that the occurrence of the imperfective aspect in (253) is also connected with the more general character, and the fact that no intention to realize the infinitive situation is ascribed to a specific agent.

Besides sentences with *tol’ko* sentences with a possibility reading without *tol’ko* occur:

- (254) Takix ljudej po pal’cam **pereschitat’**. (*Russkaja Grammatika*, 1980, II: 377)  
such people-ACC on fingers count-INF-PERF  
‘You can count such people on your fingers.’
- (255) Posredi lesnoj tishi, gde rukoj **dostat’** do neba, – ja stoju v sugrobax snega (...). (Bricyn, 1990: 230/ Cybin)  
amongst wood silence, where with hand touch-INF-PERF to sky, I stand in piles of.snow (...)  
‘Amongst the silence of the wood, where one can reach the sky with one’s hand, I was standing in piles of snow.’
- (256) Tak u nej byloumno izdelano: takaja lju’ka bol’shaja, vrode dvuspal’naja, i tuda i sjuda **klast’**. (Timofeev, 1950: 281/ L. Tolstoj)  
so with her was smart done: such cradle big, type double.bed, and there and here put-INF-IMPERF  
‘So it was very well done: a big cradle, like a double bed, and you could put it everywhere.’

In contrast to the sentences with a dative that express possibility, we do not find the context of deblocking in the case of the impersonal sentences under discussion (contrast, *tol’ko*, interrogative sentence, *xot’, chtoby*). An exception can possibly be made for (254) with the modification *po pal’cam* (‘on your fingers’); this modification can

possibly be seen as a negative context, comparable to *tol'ko*. A similar analysis cannot, however, be given for the other examples.<sup>129</sup>

As I remarked above, in older stages of Russian, this specific use of the infinitive was possibly less restricted than it is now. In modern Russian such cases are normally expressed with the adverbial predicate *mozžno* ('may'). Since I have not attested many examples of sentences like these it is difficult to analyze them thoroughly, so I will confine myself to a few observations.

Firstly, they do not clearly express the idea of *succeeding* in doing an action. This can be motivated by the absence of the dative participant. If no agent is expressed, we do not attribute an intention to a *specific* agent to realize the action, but only to a generic agent. Secondly, in these sentences, the possibility is not a property of the non-specified agent, like in the case of sentences with a dative. Sentences without dative subject have the following structure: an object, referent (which may be a situation or a place) is such (has such properties), that it makes the realization of the infinitive action by some contextually given agent (or generic agent if no agent is given in the context) possible. In other words, the deblocking is provided by the particular properties of the referent. As such, the deblocking is less strong than in the case of sentences with a dative subject. A sentence like the following is not possible:

- (257) ?Posredi lesnoj tishi mne rukoj dostat' do neba.  
amongst wood silence I-DAT with.hand reach sky

The specific contexts that trigger a possibility interpretation in the case of subject-datives are listed above.

In all sentences given here the predicative adverb *mozžno* can be inserted. Sentences with *mozžno* essentially have the same structure as the infinitive sentences under discussion. The modal adverb of (im)possibility *nel'zja / mozžno* can be used to express (im)possibility only in the case of a generic subject, i.e. if it is not combined with a dative subject:

- (258) Na ètom avtobuse mozžno/ nel'zja doexat' do centra.  
in that bus can-ADV/ cannot-ADV reach-INF-PERF to center  
'One can(not) reach the center with that bus.'
- (259) Ètu zadachu mozžno reshit' ochen' bystro.

---

<sup>129</sup> It may be that the context of deblocking in (255) is connected with the interrogative form *gde*.

that problem can-ADV solve-INF-PERF very quickly  
 'One can solve that problem very quick.'

In combination with a dative subject it expresses deontic (im)possibility, i.e. prohibition/ permission:

(260) Ej nel'zja est' sladkoe.  
 she-DAT cannot-ADV eat-INF-IMPERF sweet  
 'She may not eat sweet things.'

(261) Tebe možno voiti.  
 you-DAT may-IMP go in-INF-PERF  
 'You may enter.'

Sentences with *možno* and dative with a non-permissive possibility interpretation occur only if the possibility can be seen as induced by some external force, that is, if circumstances, and not an inherent property of the agent, give you the possibility of realizing Y:

(262) ... , i serdce nachalo tak sil'no bit'sja, chto drugomu možno bylo slyшат' ego. (Scholz, 1973: 151/ Gogol').  
 ... , and heart started so forceful beat, that other-DAT can-ADV was-NEUT hear-INF-IMPERF him  
 'And the heart started to beat so hard, that someone else could hear it.'

(263) A možno mne teper' dogadat'sja, chto proizoshlo v tex parax, gde partnery soxranili podstrojku?<sup>130</sup> (Text on hypnosis)  
 and can-ADV I-DAT now guess, what went.on in those couples, where partners kept arrangement  
 'And is it now possible for me to guess what happened with those couples that kept the arrangement?(...)'

(264) Vojna byla konchena. Nakonec mne možno bylo exat' k moim roditeljam. (A. Pushkin, *Arap Petra velikogo*)  
 war was ended. at.last I-DAT may-ADV was go-INF-IMPERF to my parents  
 'The war had ended. At last I could go to my parents.'

---

<sup>130</sup> [http:// www.moshkow.pp.ru:5000/ lat/ DPEOPLE/ gorin.txt](http://www.moshkow.pp.ru:5000/lat/DPEOPLE/gorin.txt)

- (265) Prochitav neskol'ko stranic, on axnul, reshiv, chto u nego belaja gorjachka. Ego napugalo bol'she vsego to, chto emu – znachit – nel'zja dal'she pit', a do litra vodki on ne dobral eshche 200 gramm.<sup>131</sup> (J. Mamleev, *Tetrad' individualista*)  
after.reading some pages, he sighed, deciding, that at him white fever. him frightened most of.all that, that he-DAT – means – may.not-ADV further drink, but till liter of.wodka he not took still 200 gramms  
'After reading some pages, he sighed, and decided that he had delirium tremens. The main reason to be frightened of this was because he couldn't drink anymore, and there were still only 200 grams left from the liter of vodka.'

In the case of both the sentences given earlier and the sentences with *mozhno*, the possibility to do the infinitive situation is not so much a property of the agent of the infinitive; cases of possibility where the possibility is the result of an internal property are expressed with the verb *mozh'*. Two questions have to be asked here: (a) What is the difference between cases with and without *mozhno?*, and (b) Why is the context of deblocking less strong than in the case of sentences with a dative?

The answer for (b) is probably connected with the absence of the dative, and the difference between this type of possibility and the possibility of cases with a dative. In the case of the sentences with a dative subject, the subject must be seen as a *recipient*. A possibility interpretation occurs only in those cases where the idea of deblocking is in accordance with the idea of recipienthood. These cases are restricted to contexts where there is some kind of ontic deblocking, or physical deblocking. In sentences without dative subject, no such restriction occurs. In these sentences the possibility interpretation is connected with the association of the infinitive agent with a generic agent. This act of relating can be compared to 'it is the case that'. In many sentences this 'it is the case that' character has no clear modal nature. Consider the following sentences where we find no modal interpretation:

- (266) [Ogneva] ... Vecherom – v poezd, i – zabyt' i spat' ... Prosnut'sja daleko, daleko, – v okne mel'kajut telegrafnye stolby. (Bondarko & Bulanin, 1967/ A. Tolstoj)  
[Ogneva] ... at night – in train, and – forget-INF-PERF and sleep-INF-IMPERF... dream-INF-PERF far, far, – in window flash telegraph poles  
'At night – in the train, *forget* and *sleep* ... To wake up, far far away, in the window the flash of telegraph poles.'
- (267) Kak priedet – spat'.<sup>132</sup> (L. Leonov, *Barsuki*)

---

<sup>131</sup> <http://www.rvb.ru:8090/mamleev/01prose/2stories/2centre/01-2-2-24.htm>

how comes home – sleep-INF-IMPERF  
 ‘As soon as he comes home – he *goes to sleep*.’

- (268) Da ved’ emu tol’ko glazom mignut’, on takim by psom obzavelsja, chto axnut’.  
 (Bulgakov, *Sobach’e serdce*)  
 yes PRT he-DAT only with.eye blink-INF-PERF, he such dog IRR obtained, that  
 gasp-INF-PERF  
 ‘Well, he only had to blink, and he would have gotten a dog that *makes you gasp*.’

In the first sentence a scene is introduced (Večerom – v poezd) and it is stated that in this situation the infinitive action applies (people do this action in this situation).<sup>133</sup> In the second sentence it is expressed that as soon as the subject comes home, the infinitive action is the case. In this sentence the infinitive is interpreted as ‘the action will take place’. In (268) it is expressed that if a particular situation is the case (he has the dog), the infinitive action will also be the case; in this sentence the infinitive is interpreted as ‘will take place because of the influence of the given situation’. In all these sentences the use of the infinitive stresses the type character of the action; (What does the agent do in the given situation? It is the infinitive action that applies/ is the case).

Why do we not find a possibility interpretation in these sentences? A possibility interpretation occurs in those cases where we can ascribe an intention to the generic agent to realize the action (favored by the perfective aspect), and where circumstances make the realization of the action possible. Note that in many cases it is not clear whether one should speak of a possibility interpretation, necessity interpretation, or an ‘applies’ situation; this is the case for example in (266) above. The ‘hybrid’ nature of the interpretation of the sentences under discussion may be the answer for (b). Sentences with the predicative adverb *mozžno* express possibility; sentences without adverb have a less specific modal meaning. In some contexts, it may be, that such an underspecified modality is more appropriate.<sup>134</sup>

<sup>132</sup> <http://moshkov.orsk.ru/Library/lat/LEONOWL/barsuki.txt>

<sup>133</sup> Compare Dutch: Bij ons is het liegen, bedriegen en geroddel. (Daklozenkrant); (at us is lie-INF, cheat-INF and gossip-INF). Sentences like these can in principle be interpreted differently, depending on the context, as cases of necessity, possibility or ‘is the case’.

<sup>134</sup> In older stages of Russian the situation was different because of the different linguistic system, more specifically because of the absence, or different use of *mozžno*. It may be that the meaning of permanent possibility, remarked by Vinogradov & Shvedova (1964: 337), was therefore more freely expressed by infinitive sentences than it is now.

#### **4.11 The DI-construction with the subordinators *pered tem*, *kak*, *chtoby*, and *esli***

The DI-construction can occur as a subordinate clause introduced by the subordinator of anteriority *pered tem*, *kak* ('before'), with the subordinator of purpose *chtoby* ('in order'), and with the conditional subordinator *esli* ('if'). Because of the subordinate context, the occurrence of the dative subject in these cases depends on the semantics of the subordinator. As I have mentioned before, I will analyze such sentences as subordinate clauses with infinitival predicates.

Sentences with the subordinators under discussion and a dative are rather infrequent in modern Russian. The standard rule for *pered tem*, *kak* and *chtoby* and an infinitive (e.g. (71)–(72)) is that the agent of the situation mentioned in the principal clause is co-referential with the non-expressed infinitive agent; in such cases the agent of the infinitive action is not expressed, but can be inferred from the context. In the case of *esli* (e.g. (73)) the infinitive agent remains unspecified, and is interpreted as the generic agent:

What these constructions have in common is that, relative to the moment expressed by the subordinator, the infinitive situation is projected in a hypothetical world or space. A construction with another conjunction such as the conjunction of posteriority and the infinitive is therefore not possible:

- (269) \*A posle togo, kak zabolet', ochen' skoro umer.  
but after that how become.ill-INF, very soon died

Bricyn (1990: 284) notes that constructions with *esli* are never oriented on the past

- (270) \*Esli vstavat' rano, uvidel rassvet.  
if get up-INF early, saw.3sg dawn

The occurrence of the dative subject in sentences with the above-mentioned subordinators is often treated as a purely syntactic phenomenon, especially in the generative literature (e.g. Schoorlemmer, 1995; for cases with *pered tem*, *kak*), or as a means to avoid co-reference disturbance (Rubinstein, 1986, for cases with *chtoby*). Below I will argue that the claim that the dative subject does not have experiencer semantics in the case of the subordinators under discussion cannot be maintained. As I will argue, all cases with a dative have experiencer semantics, and can, as such, be seen as instances of the DI-construction.

4.11.1 The DI-construction with *pered tem, kak* ('before')

Below we find examples of the DI-construction with the conjunction of anteriority *pered tem, kak* ('before'):

- (271) Pered tem, kak **nam pojavit'sja** v Leninoj kvartire, dushevnyj papa pobyval na obedu i predusmotritel'no zagotovil sebe na vecher 10 litrovuju kanistru piva (...).<sup>135</sup>  
before we-DAT appear-INF-PERF in of.Lena house, understanding father stayed on dinner and foresightfully prepared for.self on evening 10 jerry.can of.beer (...)  
'Before we were to appear in Lena's house, her understanding papa had dinner, and foresightfully prepared himself a jerry can with 10 litres of beer for the evening.'
- (272) Za den' pered tem, kak **im pribyt'** v Sautgempton, mama sprosila, xochetsja li ej snova uvidet' ajju. <sup>136</sup> (R. Kipling, *Devjat' sbornikov rasskazov*)  
till day before they-DAT arrive-INF-PERF in Southampton, mama asked, want PRT she again see Ajju  
'A day before they were to arrive in Southampton, mama asked whether she would like to see Ajju again.'
- (273) Pered tem kak **nam uzhe uxodit'** na pristan', podoshel staruxin syn. (Proeme, *forthcoming*! A. Gajdar, *Sud'ba barabanscbhika*)  
before we-DAT already go.out-INF-IMPERF to pier, came of.old.woman son  
'Before we went to the pier, the son of the old woman came up to us.'
- (274) Pered tem, kak **sluchit'ja vsej ètoj istorii**, ja spokojno pisal svoego Chonkina (...).(I. Vojnovich, *Ivan'kiada ili Rasskaz a vselenii pisatelja Vojnovicha v novuju kvartiru*)  
before happen-INF-PERF this history, I quietly wrote my Chonkin  
'Before this history was going to happen, I was quietly writing my Chonkin.'
- (275) [N]ochi za dve pered tem, kak **baryshne umeret'**, gljanula na tualet, a v zerkale stoit kto-to belyj-belyj, kak mel, da dlinnyj-predlynnyj! (I. Bunin, *Rasskazy*)  
nights over two before lady die-INF-PERF, looked at toilette, but in mirror stands someone white white, like chalk, but long-very.long!  
'Two nights before the lady was to die, I looked at my appearance, but in the mirror I saw someone very white, like chalk, and very tall.'

<sup>135</sup> <http://www.anekdot.ru:8084/an/an9811/o981103.html>

<sup>136</sup> <http://kulichki-lat.rambler.ru/moshkow/KIPLING/rasskazy.txt>

- (276) [Pushkin] zanimalsja svoim ‘Sovremennikom’ i za chas pered tem, kak **emu exat** ‘streljat’sja, napisal pis’mo k Ishimovoj (...) (Proeme, *forthcoming*)  
Pushkin was working on his ‘Sovremennik’ and over hour before, he-DAT go-INF shoot-INF-IMPERF, wrote letter to Ishimova.  
‘Pushkin was working on his ‘Sovremennik’ and an hour before he went to duel, he wrote a letter to Ishimova.’
- (277) Ja vynuzhden byl unosit’ s soboj iz stolovoj v spal’nju tot dragocennyj, xrupkij poceluj, kotoryj mama imela obyknovenie darit’ mne, kogda ja lezhal v posteli, pered tem kak **mne zasnut**’ (...).<sup>137</sup>(M. Prust, *Po napravleniju k Svanu*)  
I accustomed was take with me from dining-room to sleeping.room that dear, fragile kiss, that mama habit give me, when I laid in bed, before I-DAT fall.asleep-INF-PERF (...)  
‘I was accustomed to taking the kiss with me from the dining room to the sleeping room, that dear, fragile kiss, that my mama always gave me, when I laid in bed, before falling asleep.’

Note that in most sentences the agent of the infinitive is not co-referential with the agent of the situation in the main clause; exceptions are sentence (276) and (277). Furthermore, all sentences have an ‘ontic’ character, which is underlined in some cases by the English translation with the construction [be + to INF].

Schoorlemmer (1995: 64) argues that the dative in the case of infinitival complements of anteriority (*pered tem kak*) must be seen as a so-called structural dative. She claims about infinitive complements with conjunctions of anteriority that the “[s]tructural dative case is not connected to experiencer semantics”. An analysis such as the one given by Schoorlemmer leaves many questions unanswered. It does not motivate (a) why the infinitive is assigned a dative subject, (b) why in some instances of the DI-construction we find modal interpretations, whereas in others no clear modality is expressed, and (c) what the difference in meaning is between cases with and without a dative.

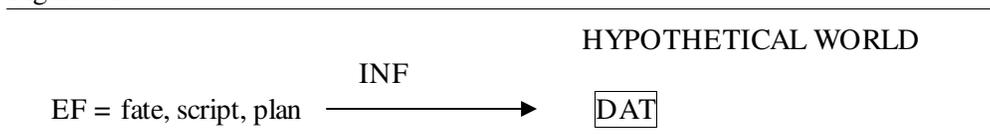
I wish to argue that the specific features of the DI-construction mentioned above can be motivated by the meaning of the DI-construction given earlier, viz. the participant expressed in the dative is the recipient of a situation type, and the meaning of *pered tem, kak*. In the construction under discussion, the conjunction *pered tem, kak* indicates a situation just before the intended or expected realization of another situation. The idea of expected course of events is realized differently. In some cases the external force

---

<sup>137</sup> <http://moskow.orsk.ru/Library/lat/INPROZ/PRUST/swan.txt>

can be identified with a plan or script (as in *before we were to appear*), or something like ‘the way things go’ (as in *before she was to die*). Such cases share properties with ontic necessitative cases. The construction under discussion can be represented in a simplified way as shown in Figure 4.18.

Figure 4.18



In this construction the dative participant is the recipient of an action assigned to him by a force, which may be identified with a script/ plan or ontic force (‘the way things go’).

In some sentences, the external force can be identified with some planned or intended action that the subject is just about to realize. This is the case for example in (273); in this sentence it is expressed that the subject of the sentence wanted to realize a particular action, but was stopped in the realization of this action due to the circumstances expressed in the main clause. Note that the occurrence of the modal particle *uzhe* (‘already’) in (273) is connected with the specific meaning of the construction: it expresses that according to some plan or script the time had come to to realize the infinitive action. The use of this particle stresses that according to plan, the infinitive situation was just about to be realized.

The analysis given here motivates why the dative is not expressed in the case of *prezhde chem*. In the case of the conjunction of anteriority *prezhde chem*, the anteriority is not specified with respect to closeness. This complementizer indicates that there is a temporal order of anteriority between events X and Y, and focusses on the realization of the situation expressed in the main-clause. In the case of the sentences with *pered tem, kak* the contribution of the conjunction is not only to express that there exists a temporal order between two events, but also to stress that the action of the subject in the main clause occurs just before the moment that is ‘predestined’ to be the moment on which the action of the infinitive will occur.<sup>138</sup> As such, the meaning of this conjunction is in accordance with the ontic character of the DI-construction.

---

<sup>138</sup> Schoorlemmer (1994: 63) does not observe this and treats them equally, even changing the conjunction in (10) to *prezhde chem*.

The *ontic* character that we find in the DI-construction is absent in sentences without a dative and in sentences with a finite verb; compare:

- (278) Pered tem, kak nagnut'sja, ona posmotrela v nebo. (V. Aksenov, *Oz'bog*)  
before bend.down-INF, she looked at sky  
'Just before she bent down, she looked at the sky.'
- (279) A moj kollega po koktejlu, kak mne potom rasskazali, ushel kak raz pered tem, kak ja poshel v tualet.<sup>139</sup>  
but my colleague by cocktail, as me afterwards they.told, went.away immediately before I went to toilet  
'But my cocktail companion went away, as they told me afterwards, just before I went to the toilet.'

In (278) no reference is made to the ontic nature of the events; the conjunction + infinitive points to the moment just before the realization of the infinitive situation. The ontic nature is also not expressed in (279); note that in this sentence the infinitive cannot be used because this would lead to co-reference disturbance.

#### 4.11.2 The DI-construction with *chtoby* ('(in order) to')

Below we find examples of the DI-construction with the conjunction of anteriority *chtoby* ('in order'):

- (280) Kstati, ja koe-cto zaberu, **chtoby tebe** zavtra ne tashchit' mnogo. (Proeme, *forthcoming*)  
by.the.way, I something take, in.order you-DAT tomorrow not carry-INF-IMPERF much  
'By the way, I will take something, so that you won't have to carry much tomorrow.'
- (281) Na to ved' i moe prizvan'e./ Chtob ne skuchali rasstojan'ja./ **Chtoby** za gorodskoju gran'ju/ **Zemle** ne **toskovat'** odnoj. (*The Penguin book of Russian verse*, 1962/ B. Pasternak)  
(...)/ So.that beyond town boundary/ earth-DAT not pine-INF-IMPERF alone-DAT  
'It is my calling, after all, to see that distances do not feel lonely and that beyond the town boundary the earth does not pine in solitude.'

---

<sup>139</sup> <http://www.anekdot.ru:8084/an/an9804/t980411.html>

- (282) Nashe schast'e v otkrytom puti/ V tom **chtob rodine** jarche **cvesti/ Chtob** v prostorax skvoz' versty/ **Serdce druga najti**.<sup>140</sup> (Songtext, 1960)  
 our happiness in open road/ in that in.order homeland-DAT clearer shine-INF- IMPERF/ in.order in spaces though wersts/ heart-ACC friend find-INF-PERF  
 'Our happiness lies in the open road/ In that the homeland will shine brighter/ To find the heart of a friend miles away in the spacious fields.'
- (283) Oni zhdu poezda, kotoryj ix povezet, **chtoby im ne opozdat'** kuda-to. (Rubinstein, 1986: 367/ Okudzhava)  
 they waited for-INF train, that them will.take, in order they-DAT not be.late-INF-PERF somewhere  
 'They wait for the train which will take them, so that they won't be late.'

As I remarked above, in most sentences with *chtoby* and an infinitival predicate, the identity of the non-expressed infinitive agent is non-specified, and contextually given. In the sentences above, however, the dative is expressed to identify the potential subject of the infinitive. Note that in the case of infinitives with indirect objects in their valence, this interpretation is not possible; in these cases the dative is interpreted as the indirect object of the infinitive verb, e.g.<sup>141</sup>

- (284) Emu i tak bylo nelovko, da eshche èto "tpru-u"! Chto on, loshad' chto li, **chtoby emu govorit'** "tpru-u"?!<sup>142</sup> (V. Krukovskij, *Myj Tractankut*)  
 (...) what he, horse, or something, in.order he-DAT speak-INF-IMPERF "tpru-u"?!  
 'He felt already so uncomfortable, and then also that "giddy-up"! As if he was some kind of horse, to say "giddy-up" to him?!'

The use of infinitival clauses with *chtoby* and a dative subject is analyzed by Rubinstein (1986). Rubinstein states that the occurrence of the dative subject in infinitive clauses of purpose (ICPs) in Russian is much more restricted now than it was in the past, but still occurs in colloquial and popular speech.<sup>143</sup> Rubinstein shows in his article that when stylistic conditions are satisfied, certain structural factors come into play. The use of the dative subject in ICPs is favored by co-reference disturbance (complete co-reference, partial or obscured co-reference with the matrix subject, contrastive emphasis, lack of

<sup>140</sup> <http://math.ucsd.edu/~broido/lyr/L2/L2.39.lat.html>

<sup>141</sup> At least, in all the examples that I have attested this was the interpretation at stake.

<sup>142</sup> <http://www.litera.ru:8085/slova/krukovsky/trahtk.html>

<sup>143</sup> Nikiforov (1952: 207) discusses infinitive sentences with *chtoby* and a dative from the second half of the sixteenth century; the sentences he discusses are classified as cases of necessity ('dolzhenstvovanie').

expressed matrix subject); in the case of co-reference disturbance, the use of the subject-dative is usually obligatory in ICPs, since it is the only means of avoiding ambiguity. Rubinstein also observes that the use of the subject-dative in the ICP is favored by negation. As Rubinstein (1986: 373) remarks, some instances of the construction are not possible without negation:

- (285) Ja prines dokumenty, chtoby **mne** ne **byt'** na sude goloslovnym.  
I brought documents, in.order I-DAT not be-INF in court without.motivation  
'I brought the documents, so that I wouldn't be in court without motive.'
- (286) Ja prines dokumenty, chtoby (\***mne**) **pokazat'** ix na sude.  
I brought documents, in order (I-DAT) show-INF-PERF them in court
- (287) Ja luchshe pojdu tuda sam, chtoby **mne** ne **prosit'** ego lishnij raz.  
I better go there myself, in.order I-DAT not ask-INF-PERF him another time  
'I'd better go there myself, so that I don't have to ask him another time.'
- (288) Ja luchshe pojdu tuda sam, chtoby (\***mne**) **prosit'** ego lishnij raz.  
I better go there myself, in.order (I-DAT) ask-INF-PERF him another time

Rubinstein notes about this phenomenon that “[t]he action of negation can probably be accounted for by the semantics of negative ICPs similar to that of certain modal structures in which the DAT [subject-dative] is often expressed” (1986: 376–7). He also remarks about his study: “Nor does it treat such important problems as the relation of ICPs to infinitival sentences and the grammatical status of the DAT [subject-dative]” (1986: 377).

In my opinion, the intuition expressed by Rubinstein that there is a relation between modal infinitives and ICPs with a dative subject is essentially correct but should be put more strongly: ICPs with a dative subject *are* instances of the modal infinitive construction. If we recognize this we can motivate the distribution of the ICPs with a dative subject by means of the meaning of the construction and the meaning of *chtoby*. The modal nature of the construction can have the character of future-oriented possibility, (negation of) epistemic necessity, and negation of deontic necessity.

The particular use of the construction must be motivated by the meaning of *chtoby* and the meaning of the DI-construction. The subordinator *chtoby* expresses the goal of an action, and as such situates the intended goal in a hypothetical world; in combination with the DI-construction, this goal is the situation that some participant is the recipient of an

action type. The goal character accounts for the future oriented nature of the construction that we find in all cases, and motivates why the ICP with a dative subject rejects past or future tense of *byl'* (Rubinstein, 1986: 377).<sup>144</sup> The meaning of the construction can further motivate the specific distribution, and why the action of a negation favors the subject-dative. The specific contexts of use can be explained pragmatically.

One can do an action to facilitate the occurrence of another action intended by some agent; this is only possible in cases of deblocking. One can do an action to facilitate the non-occurrence of a non-intended action by some agent; in that case the sentence can be paraphrased with *ne nuzhno*. One can do an action in order to facilitate the occurrence or non-occurrence of some action because one wants the occurrence or non-occurrence of the situation oneself. In that case the intention to do the action of the infinitive agent is not considered; case one can speak of (absence of) epistemic-ontic necessity. The pragmatic possibilities of the construction can be schematized as shown in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6.

|               | <i>'will'</i><br>Ontic necessity | <i>'can'</i><br>Ontic possibility | <i>'does not have to'</i><br>Absence (de)ontic<br>necessity | <i>'won't'</i><br>Absence ontic<br>necessity |
|---------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| Intention Inf | not considered                   | + (perfective)                    | –   | not considered                               |
| Negation      | –                                | –                                 | +   | +  |
| Deblocking    | –                                | +                                 | –   | –  |

I have not seen examples of deontic necessity and impossibility in affirmative sentences, although I think that it should in principle be possible in those cases where you do an action to make the action necessary for someone else (I do X such that Y has to do Z), or to take away the impossibility of some action.

I suspect that (286) is unacceptable because of the valency of *pokazat'* (+3) and because the DI-construction with a perfective infinitive only occurs *without* negation if some kind of *deblocking* is involved; such cases have a so-called 'possibility' interpretation. It may be that in (286) the idea of deblocking is not sufficiently sustained by the context

<sup>144</sup> In one of his own examples *bylo* is expressed: *Ja dlja sebja ee [muku], che li, prijatelja, dlja sebja beregla? Dlja vas zhe, parazity vy nenaednye, chtob vam zantra bylo che zhevat? Chtob vam zhe s golodu ne podoxnut?* (Rubinstein, 1986: 372/ Rasputin). In this sentence, however, *bylo* does not refer to a past event.

of the sentence: we do not first have a situation where the subject is blocked (first I was not in the position to show the documents in court) and then a situation where this blockage is taken away. The precise nature of deblocking in sentences like these needs further analysis.

Finally, an answer must be given to the question of how sentences with a dative differ from ICPs without a dative. A reason to express the dative may be that the expression of the dative leads to a stronger modal character than in those sentences where no dative is expressed. I suspect that the expression of a dative in ICPs may stress the modal nature of the scene; the unification of the non-specified infinitive agent with a specific agent focuses on the imposing or deblocking of an action. Take the following ICP without a dative subject:

- (289) Bez ljubovnoj uslady/ Ne xochu bol'she zhit'/ Est' eshche v skljanke jadu/ Chtoby zhizn' **prekratit'**,<sup>145</sup>  
without love delight/ not want further live/ is still in phial poison/ In.order life end-INF  
'Without the delight of love/ I do not want to live any further/ There is still poison in the phial/ To end my life.'

In this sentence the phrase *Chtoby zhizn' prekratit'* ('to end my life') can be seen as a complement to *jadu*. Here it is not possible to express the dative (*me*) because this would imply that the poison exists to facilitate the realization of the infinitive action.

#### 4.11.3 The DI-construction with *esli* ('if')

Below some find examples are given of the DI-construction with the subordinator of condition *esli*. Such sentences can be called 'infinitive complements of condition (ICC):

##### *Affirmative sentences with negation*

- (290) **Esli zakljuchennomu ne perestukivat'sja**, tak chto emu i delat'?' (Proeme, *forthcoming*! A. Solzhenicyn, *Arxipelag Gulag*)  
if prisoner-DAT not communicate.by.tapping-INF-IMPERF, then, what he-DAT and do-INF?  
'If a prisoner may not communicate by tapping, what else should/ could he do?'

---

<sup>145</sup> <http://math.ucsd.edu/~broido/lyr/D5/D5.11.lat.html>

- (291) [M]ozhet delo doйти do ubijstva, **esli emu ne zhit'** ot del'no za stenoj (...). (Proeme  
*forthcoming!* L. Petrushevskaja, *P'esy*)  
can case go till murder, if he-DAT not live-INF-IMPERF separate behind wall  
'People may get killed, if he will not/ may not live behind a separate wall.'
- (292) [E]sli on umret prez hde, chem budet postavleno "Kol'co", on zaveshchaet partituru  
Listu s tem, chtoby poslednij szheg ee, **esli emu uzhe ne dostich'** ispolnenija ee v  
zhelaemom duxe <sup>146</sup> (Text on Wagner)  
if he dies before, then will.be performed 'The Ring', he dedicates score to.List with  
that, in.order last burned it, if he-DAT already not achieve-INF-PERF performance  
of.it in wished spirit  
'In case he dies before the 'Ring' is performed, he dedicates the score to List with the  
task to burn it, if he does not achieve the performance of the piece in the way he  
wants.'

*Affirmative sentences without negation*

- (293) **Esli delu tomu sdelat'sja**, tak razve na tu zimu (Ebeling, 1984: 116/ Mel'nikov).  
if case-DAT that-DAT do-INF-PERF, then PRT in that winter  
'If we have to do it anyway, then it's better to do it next winter.'
- (294) Net, brat, izvini, uzh **koli chemu** na vystavku **itti**, tak razve ètoj gruppe. (ibid.)  
no, brother, sorry, PRT if that-DAT to exhibition go-INF, then PRT that-DAT group-  
DAT  
'No brother, sorry, if anyone goes to the exhibition, then it will be that group.'

*Interrogatives*

- (295) Ja podumal, chto **esli mne ne shevelit'sja, zameret'**, oni zabudut o moem prisutstvii.  
<sup>147</sup>(K. Lomer, *Planeta katastrof*)  
I thought, that if I-DAT not move-INF-IMPERF, freeze-INF-PERF, they will.forget  
about my presence  
'I thought that if I didn't move, and if I froze, they would forget about my presence.'
- (296) Chto **esli mne samoj** odnazhdy k vam pod vecher **zajti?** (...) Chto **esli mne** igrushku  
synu tvoemu **podarit'**?<sup>148</sup>

<sup>146</sup> <http://www.magister.msk.ru:8085/library/personal/wagner/lwagner.htm><sup>147</sup> <http://icc.migsv.ru/library/lat/LAUMER/plcatast.txt>

what if I-DAT self-DAT once to you near evening go-INF-PERF? (...) what if I-DAT  
toy to.son your give-INF-PERF  
'What if I came to you in the evening sometime. What if I gave your son some presents?'

- (297) A chto vy skazhete, *esli nam seychas kupit'* vodku i pojti ko mne. (D. Xarms, 1991: 410)  
and what you say, if we-DAT now buy-INF-PERF vodka and go-INF-PERF to me.  
'What do you think, how about if we bought some vodka and went to my place.'

As I remarked above, hypothetical sentences with *esli* and an infinitive usually occur without dative; in those cases the non-specified infinitive agent is unified with the generic subject. Sentences with *esli* + infinitive express a hypothetical scene (expressed by *esli*) where the infinitive situation is the case; such sentences can be paraphrased with 'if generic agent x ('one') does Y'. In such cases the modal character of the sentence is less clear than in cases where the ICC occurs with a dative. In sentences with a dative, the scene expressed by the infinitive clause is not just interpreted as 'being the case', but rather as something that is assigned to the dative participant by some force. I would like to assert that the occurrence of the dative is triggered by a specific context, viz. a context where the initial information state is that the dative participant will not do the infinitive situation, and where this information state is contradicted in the hypothetical world opened up by *esli*. I will briefly discuss these contexts below.

In sentence (290) the dative can be motivated because the speaker holds that the realization of the infinitive situation should be the case, and gives an invitation to imagine the undesirable situation where a force interdicts the proposed realization. In this sentence the dative can be motivated because there is an emphasis on the fact that the subject will *not even* do the infinitive situation. Put differently, the speaker proposes that one assume something to be the case that one would normally not assume to be the case because it is highly inappropriate. Note that in contrast to the regular impossibility interpretation of the DI-construction this force may also be a deontic force, such that the construction is interpreted as 'x *may not* do Y'.<sup>149</sup>

Sentence (291) is similar to (290); here the speaker also holds that the realization of the infinitive situation should be the case, and claims that if the way things go is such

---

<sup>148</sup> <http://math.ucsd.edu/~broido/lyr/L2/L2.44.lat.html>

<sup>149</sup> The DI-construction never expresses deontic impossibility. The interpretation of the force as a deontic interdicting force in the construction with *esli* is not clear to me.

that this realization is blocked, bad things will happen. In this case the occurrence of the dative can be motivated by the *ontic* character of the sentence.

In (292) the occurrence of the dative is facilitated by the particle *uzbe*. This particle stresses that there is no way in which the infinitive situation can still be realized. This case is close to regular uses of the DI-construction that express impossibility (not succeeding).

In non-interrogative affirmative sentences like (293) and (294) the force that assigns the infinitive situation to the dative participant can be identified with ‘the way things go’. In these sentences the occurrence of the dative is not only triggered by the idea of an ontic force that assigns a situation, under the presupposition that the occurrence of the infinitive action may very well not occur in the actual world; in such sentences one can speak of epistemic deblocking. Sentences like these can be paraphrased as: ‘I don’t think that X will be the case, but let’s suppose for argument’s sake that x is the case.’ I think that such an analysis must also be given for sentence (9) above with negation; in this sentence the speaker asserts that in principle the truck and the combine-harvester are harmless, *provided that* they don’t cross the road. This means that in reality, they may be dangerous.

A similar analysis can be given for interrogative sentences (295)–(297) that all have the character of a suggestion. In (295) and (296) the speaker suggests realizing the infinitive action, while taking into account that the addressee does not agree with the realization of the infinitive situation. In (297) a similar reading occurs; such sentences differ from cases without dative in that the realization of the infinitive action is presented as only a possible situation, that in reality might very well not occur.

#### 4.12 Optative sentences without *by* or *tol’ko*

The infinitive can be used with a dative subject to express the wish or desire of the speaker that the infinitive situation will be realized:

- (298) **Zhit’ vam** do sta let! (Van der Auwera & Plungian, 1998)  
 live-INF-IMPERF you-DAT till hundred years  
 ‘May you live a hundred years.’

A similar case can be found below, although in this sentence the ontic character of the construction is more straightforward:

*Meaning and interpretation of the DI-construction*

- (299) **Provalit'sja mne** na ètom meste!<sup>150</sup> (M. Pavich, *Vechnost' i eshche odin den'*)  
disappear-INF-PERF I-DAT on this place  
'I will disappear from this place [if I lie]!'

These sentences have an SV order, which is the typical order for optative sentences without optative conjunction (see 3.6.3 for a discussion of the meaning of word order).<sup>151</sup> Van der Auwera & Plungian (1998) suggest that this use of the infinitive must be seen as a later development of the infinitive, more specifically as a diachronical extension of the meaning of necessity. I do not see this as a necessary conclusion. In my opinion both uses – necessity and wish – can be seen as uses or interpretations of the abstract meaning of the construction. The optative use of the DI-construction can be compared to sentences where the force directed at the realization of the infinitive action can be identified with the stroke of fate, or the way things go. The idea of wish, or desire is attributed by the word order of the sentence and the particular meanings of the forms in the sentence. Compare:

*SV order*

- (300) **Vam zhit'** do sta let.  
you-DAT live-INF-IMPERF till hundred years  
'You will live a hundred years.'

The dative participant is the recipient of the infinitive situation; this means that some force, fate, is directed at the realization of the infinitive situation. In the case of the VS order, the speaker wishes that the dative participant be the recipient of the infinitive action. This means that the speaker expresses his wish that some force, fate, the way things go, be such that the infinitive action is assigned to the dative participant, or that the speaker can be seen as the force that assigns the infinitive action to the dative participant.<sup>152</sup>

---

<sup>150</sup> <http://kulichki-lat.rambler.ru/moshkow/INPROZ/PAWICH/day.txt>

<sup>151</sup> The sentences given here are highly idiomatic; in the spoken language, however, this construction is used productively in modern Russian.

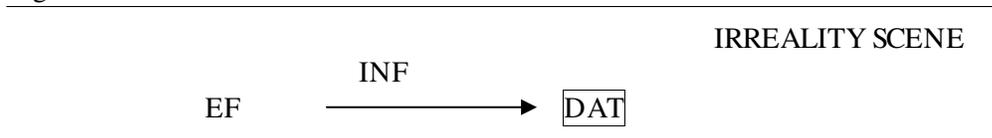
<sup>152</sup> The same construction occurs with the particle *by*; in these sentences the direction or wish by the speaker is weaker because the non-occurrence of the situation is taken into account.

### 4.13 The DI-construction with *by*

The DI-construction can occur with the particle *by*. The particle *by* expresses that the situation to which it is semantically-syntactically applied, occurs in an ‘irreality’ world. For these cases the term ‘negative epistemic stance’ may be used (see Dancygier & Sweetser, 1996). Instances of the DI-construction with *by* can express different shades of necessity, direction, and wish. As I have argued before, the meaning of the construction with *by* can be accounted for by the composition of the meanings of the components in the construction. Such a compositional analysis does not have to posit basic modalities for the construction, such as ‘possibility’ or ‘necessity’, or to speak of ‘neutralization of modality’ (cf. Veyrenc 1979: 45 and Maurice, 1996: 152, who try to analyze instances of the DI-construction with *by* as cases of necessity or possibility). In this section I will briefly discuss the different uses of the DI-construction with *by*, and analyze the process of interpretation.

Uses of the DI-construction that occur with *by* can be schematically represented as in Figure 4.19:

Figure 4.19



Different cases occur because of the different nature of the external force (speaker, non-speaker dative participant, non-speaker external force), the different nature of the dative subject (first, second, third, person), the presence or absence of negation, the aspect of the infinitive, and the presence of certain particles. The following three main types of the DI-construction with *by* can be distinguished:

- (i) EF = non-speaker external force (‘way things go’; ‘fate’, ‘norm’, ‘script’)
- (ii) EF = speaker
- (iii) EF = non-speaker dative subject

I will briefly discuss these different types below.

4.13.1 Type I: Sentences where the external force is ‘the way things go’

The following sentences are examples of uses of the DI-construction with *by* with an ontic interpretation:

- (301) [V]stretila parnja i poljubila ego, i **byt’ by svad’be**, no mat’ ee, Arina, vdrug zauprjamilas’. (...). (B. Pil’njak, *Smertel’noe manit*)  
met guy and fell-in-love with.him, and be-INF IRR wedding-DAT, but mother her, Arina, sudddenly objected  
‘She met a guy and fell in love with him, and there would have been a wedding, if her mother, Arina, had not suddenly objected..’
- (302) **Nachinat’ by bylo mne** srazu GULAG vmesto vojny, esli by ne shchastlivoe zastupnichestvo. (A. Solzhenicyn, *Arxipelag Gulag*)  
begin-INF IRR was-NEUT I-DAT immediately GULAG in-stead-of war, if IRR not happy intercession  
‘I would have started to work in the GULAG instead of going to war, if it had not been for that fortunate protection.’
- (303) [**N]am zhit’ by**, kazalos’, i knigam rasti,/ no muzy bezrodnye nas dokonali,/ i nyne pora nam iz mira ujtj.<sup>153</sup> (V. Nabokov, *Poety*)  
we-DAT live-INF-IMPERF IRR, it.seemed, and books-DAT grow-INF-IMPERF, / but muses homeless us destroyed,/ and now time for.us from world go.away  
‘We would have to live, it seemed, and the books would have to grow, / but the homeless muses destroyed us,/ and now it’s time for us to leave the world.’
- (304) **Tut by emu i ponjat’ vse**, no – net, ne soobrazil Voroncov, ne xvatilo kriticheskoi massy informacii.<sup>154</sup> (V. Zvjagincev, *Odissej pokidaet Itaku*)  
now IRR he-DAT and understand-INF-PERF all, (...)  
‘Now he should understand everything, but no, Voroncov did not understand it, the critical mass of information was not sufficient.’

In sentences like these the infinitive situation is placed in a counterfactual world. This counterfactual world may be a world that could have been the case if circumstances had been different, as in (301) and (302). In such sentences the infinitive can be seen as the apodosis of a counterfactual conditional sentence. The conditional structure is

---

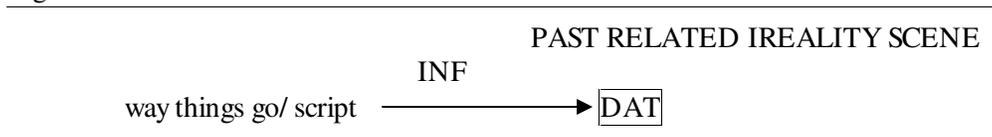
<sup>153</sup> <http://www.litera.ru:8085/stixiya/razval/nabokov.html>

<sup>154</sup> <http://kulichki-lat.rambler.ru/moshkow/ZWQGINCEW/OdisseyPokidaetItaku2.txt>

absent in (303) and (304); in these sentences the counterfactual situation is presented as something which should have been the case, but which in reality was not the case. In all cases the past character of the sentence is inferred from the context.

The sentences under discussion are visually represented in Figure 4.20.

Figure 4.20



How can we derive the interpretation of such sentences from the meaning of the construction? We start out from the meaning given earlier and specify it with a context (Figure 4.21).

Figure 4.21

**x is the recipient of a situation type Y; i.e. Y is not initiated by x**

+ *context*:

- (i) The particle *by* occurs.
- (ii) Y can be related to a contrasting past event (often the infinitive clause is part of a conditional sentence (apodosis) or can be interpreted as such).
- (iii) The auxiliary *bylo* may be expressed (see (302)).
- (iv) x is expressed in the dative, or if not expressed interpretable as a generic agent.
- (v) Y is prototypically imperfective.

*Interpretation:*

The infinitive action is situated in a counterfactual world close to the actual past world, where the dative participant x would have been the recipient of the infinitive action Y:

**In a counterfactual world, the dative participant x would have been the recipient of some action type Y; that is, the way things go would have been such that the participant expressed in the dative would have realized the infinitive action.**

---

In the sentences above the force that is directed at the occurrence of the infinitive situation can be identified with an ontic force.

#### 4.13.2 Type II: Sentences where the external force is the speaker

The DI-construction with *by* occurs in sentences where the speaker identifies with the external force. The speaker expresses the existence of a counterfactual scene where the way things go is such that the dative participant is the recipient of the infinitive situation. Since the speaker wishes the realization of the infinitive situation, the speaker can be said to identify with the force that ‘assigns’ the infinitive situation to the dative participant.

By using this construction the speaker expresses that he *wishes* the realization of the infinitive situation, after the moment of speaking, or in a past situation. The following sentences are examples of uses of the DI-construction with *by* with an interpretation of wish:

##### *Wish-Necessity pertaining to the future*

- (305) **Mne by v vodu vlezť seĵchas.**<sup>155</sup>  
I-DAT IRR in water get.into now  
‘I would like to get into the water now.’
- (306) **Otdoxnut’ by bratu.** (Mets, 1985: 385)  
rest-INF-PERF IRR brother-DAT  
‘The brother should rest/ ‘It would be good if the brother rested.’
- (307) – Molokosy! – krichal on nam, molodym gazetĉikam. (...) V gazete dolzhny byt’ takie reĉi, chtoby u chitateĉja spiralo dyxanie. A vy chto delaete? Mjamlite! **Vam by pisat’ romany o malokrovnyx devicax.** (Paustovskij, *Nachalo nevedomogo veka*)  
(...) you-DAT IRR write-INF-IMPERF novels about anemic girls  
“‘Greenhorns!’”, he shouted at us, young journalists. (...) “‘In the newspaper stories should be such that readers have difficulty breathing. And what do you do? You just twaddle. You should write novels about anemic girls.’”

---

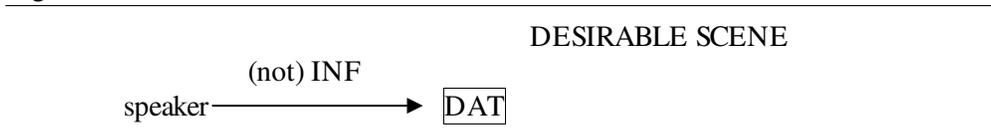
<sup>155</sup> <http://math.ucsd.edu/~broido/lyr/M2/M2.04.lat.html>

*Wish-Necessity pertaining to the past*

- (308) Ja proxodil inogda cherez ètot gorod/ **Mne by uvidet'**, a ja ego ne zamechal.<sup>156</sup> (Song text, 1930)  
I passed sometimes through this city/ I-DAT IRR see-INF-PERF, but I him not noticed  
'I sometimes passed that city. I should have seen him, but I never noticed him.'
- (309) A **mne by ne pet'**, a ja vse pel./ A **mne by sgoret'**, a ja ne sgorel (...).<sup>157</sup>(Song text, 1976)  
but I-DAT IRR not sing-INF-IMPERF, but I all sung, / but I-DAT IRR burn-INF-PERF, but I not burned  
'I shouldn't have sung, but I sang anyway, / I should have burned down, but it didn't happen.'
- (310) **Volod'ke by**, konechno, v shutku vse **prevratit'**. A on ochen' obidelsja. (Zoshchenko, 1935)  
Little.volodja-DAT IRR, of.course, in joke all change-INF-PERF. but he very was.offended  
'Volod'ka should, of course, have turned everything into a joke. But he was very offended.'

The meaning of the construction under discussion can be paraphrased with 'for x it would be/ would have been good to do Y', as represented in Figure 4.22.

Figure 4.22



If the agent in the dative can be seen as the addressee, and the situation can be interpreted as something to which the addressee can actively contribute, the construction can be seen as a directive with the character of advice:

- (311) **Otdoxnut' by tebe!** (Mets, 1985: 358)  
rest-INF-PERF IRR you-DAT

<sup>156</sup> <http://math.ucsd.edu/~broido/lyr/K11/K11.40.lat.html>

<sup>157</sup> <http://math.ucsd.edu/~broido/lyr/D2/D2.04p.lat.html>

*Meaning and interpretation of the DI-construction*

'You should rest'

- (312) **Otdyxat' by tebe** chashche! (Mets, 1985: 358)  
rest-INF-IMPERF IRR you-DAT more often  
'You should rest more often.'

This use occurs in both aspects. Oppositional forms of this construction are the imperative and the subjunctive (*Otdoxni!*; *Otdoxnul by ty!*).

In contrast to infinitive directives without *by*, this construction expresses that the realization of the infinitive action by the addressee takes place in an *ideal* world only; in reality the addressee can *refuse* to realize the action expressed by the infinitive.<sup>158</sup> Bricyn (1990: 245) observes that the DI-construction with *by* cannot be used in cases where it is clear that the infinitive action is positive only for the speaker, and not for the addressee:

- (313) ? Tebe by prinesti mne knigu.  
you IRR bring-INF-PERF to.me book  
'You should bring the book.'

This is in accordance with the meaning of the construction I that gave above, viz. 'for x it would be/ would have been good to do Y'. In this case, however, it is possible to use the subjunctive:

- (314) Ty by prines ètu knigu.  
you IRR brought that book  
'You should bring that book.'

The subjunctive may be used for cases where the realization of the action is positive only for the speaker *and* for cases where the results are positive for the addressee:

- (315) – Ty by sxodil v ètot skit, posovetovala mne mama. (K. Paustovskij, *Nachalo nevedomogo veka*)  
you IRR went-IMPERF in that monastery, advised me mama  
'“You should visit to that monastery”, advised mama.'

---

<sup>158</sup> Note that in the case of this use the dative participant is always expressed: the non-expression of the dative would lead to an interpretation where the speaker is associated with the potential agent. This differs from the directive use of the infinitive without *by*, where the addressee is usually not expressed.

The difference in use between the DI-construction and the subjunctive cannot be attributed to the meaning of *by*, since this particle occurs in both constructions. The difference in meaning must be explained by taking into account the other constituents in the construction. I suspect that the idea of ‘for x it is good’ must be attributed to the presence of the dative in the construction in relation with the other constituents. The exact nature of the dative in this construction needs further explanation.

Note that the ideal world in which the infinitive situation takes place may be a future world or a past world. The difference between these interpretations is attributed by the context, the discourse in which the construction occurs, and in the case of negative sentences, the aspect of the infinitive. I will say more about negative sentences below.

I will now briefly discuss the process of interpretation of this construction. The process of interpretation can be analyzed as follows (in Figure 4.23).

Figure 4.23

---

**x is the recipient of a situation type Y; i.e. Y is not initiated by x**

+ *syntactic-semantic features*:

- (i) The particle *by* occurs.
- (ii) X occurs in all persons; if X is not expressed it is prototypically interpreted as referring to the speaker, and in some specific cases to a generic agent.
- (iii) Y can be negated.
- (iv) In the case of a first person *tol'keo* and *lish'* can be expressed.
- (v) Y occurs in both aspects.
- (vi) Both dative-infinitive, and infinitive-dative order occurs.
- (vii) The infinitive can occur in a coordinate sentence.

*Interpretation*:

In these sentences it is expressed that ideally speaking the dative participant is the recipient of a situation type in an ideal world; this means that the speaker can be seen as the external force:

**The speaker expresses that ideally speaking x performs/performed Y (or not Y in the case of negation)**

---

I will briefly discuss the context mentioned in Figure 4.23 below:

(i) The particle *by*

The reason for the addition of *by*, the particle indicating irrealis, to the combination of the dative and the infinitive is that the infinitive situation is portrayed as an *ideal* situation that does not necessarily occur, because (i) the subject may not give in to the force to realize the infinitive situation, or (ii) because in reality the dative subject performed a different situation in the past.

The expression of the particle *by* further accounts for the element of wish in the construction, but it is not *expressed* by it. The particle *by* does not express wish, which is underlined by the occurrence of *by* in cases where the element of wish is absent, for example in the case of sentences that express the way things go as described in the preceding section.

I think that the element of wish must be seen as an interpretative phenomenon, which is attributed by the context. Maurice (1995: 165) discusses the possibility of analyzing the infinitive sentences with *by* and a dative as elliptical conditional sentences, where the apodosis, stating the positive consequences of realization of the infinitive clauses, is left out. In my opinion, it is not necessary to treat this construction as an elliptical conditional sentence. Such an analysis is just a trick to make the attribution of the context to the construction visible. In the case of the DI-construction with *by* under discussion, the speaker identifies with the force that assigns the infinitive situation to the dative participant, in an ideal world; this implies that the speaker *wants* the realization of the infinitive situation. The possibility of identification of the speaker with the force also occurs in other uses of the DI-construction, as in cases with a VS order (see 4.12), for example, or in the case of directive sentences.

(ii) The dative

Cases of the DI-construction with *by* that expresses wish can occur with all persons (first, second, third). In many cases the potential agent is not formally expressed. In these cases prototypically a first person plural or singular is associated with the non-expressed agent of the infinitive situation:<sup>159</sup>

---

<sup>159</sup> The association of the non-expressed infinitive agent with the speaker may possibly be motivated pragmatically: if a wish is uttered that a situation will be realized, the speaker is the most likely candidate to be associated with the non-expressed infinitive agent, because (i) one usually wishes something for the

- (316) Vot **by uznat'** chto tvorilos' u starogo skazochnika v golove, kogda on sochinjal ètu istoriju!<sup>160</sup>  
 PRT IRR get.to.know-INF-PERF what was.happened at old fairy.tale.writer in head,  
 when he created that story  
 'If only I knew what was going on in the head of the old fairy-tale writer when he created this story.'
- (317) Trojku by sejchas ... Uexat' **by** v snega, v step'. (V. Shukshin, *Ljubaviny, Roman*)  
 trojka IRR now ... go.away-INF-PERF IRR in snow, in steppe  
 'If only there would be a trojka now. We could go into the snow and the steppe.'
- (318) On zakusil gubu. Zabyt' **by**.<sup>161</sup>(A. Gromov, *Tekodonti*)  
 he bit lip. forget-INF-PERF IRR  
 'He bit his lip. If only he could forget/ He should forget.'

The first person may also be formally expressed as in (305) above, or as in the following sentence:

- (319) **Nam by to'ko dvinut'** ètot jashchik. (Maurice, 1996: 155/ Mickey Mouse)  
 we-DAT IRR only move-INF-PERF that box  
 'We only want to move that box.'
- (320) Chto prikazhete? – suxo sprosil metrdotel'. – **Mne by pozavtrakat'**. – Prosite, zavtrakov net.<sup>162</sup> (A. Averchenko, *Byt*)  
 what you.order? – drily asked maître d'hôtel. – I-DAT IRR have.breakfast-INF-PERF. –  
 Excuse.me breakfast not  
 "Would you like to order?", asked the maître d'hôtel drily. "I would like to have breakfast." "I am sorry, but we don't have breakfast anymore."

I suspect that omitting the dative subject is not possible in all cases where the speaker is associated with the non-expressed infinitive agent. I have not seen examples of cases

---

benefit of oneself, rather than for the benefit of others, and (ii) the speaker participant is *always* given in the context.

<sup>160</sup> <http://www.russ.ru:8085/krug/razbor/19991210.html>

<sup>161</sup> [http://kulichki-lat.rambler.ru/moshkow/RUFANT/GROMOV\\_A/tekodont.txt](http://kulichki-lat.rambler.ru/moshkow/RUFANT/GROMOV_A/tekodont.txt); this example can be seen as a case of free indirect speech.

<sup>162</sup> <http://dacota.rriai.org.ru:8005/Texts/Averchenko/byt.html>

without dative where the infinitive situation pertains to a past situation. Furthermore, I think that cases with a dative such as (319) or (320) have a slightly different character from cases without a dative. I think that cases without a dative have a stronger and more emotional character than sentences with a dative where the infinitive situation pertains to the future, like (305).

Garde (1963: 58) notes that in some cases without dative the non-expressed infinitive agent may be associated with a generic subject. According to Maurice (1996: 154) this interpretation occurs primarily in negative sentences. An example of such a reading is given below:

- (321) **Pochemu by ne pomeshat'** religioznym kul'tam promyvat' mozgi nevinnym ljudjam?  
**Pochemu by ne otkryt'** cerkovnye sudy dlja proverki mirskoj juridicheskoj sistemy?<sup>163</sup>  
why IRR not prevent-INF-IMPERF religious cults wash brains innocent people? why  
IRR not open-INF-PERF church courts for control by.worldly juridical system?  
'Why not prevent religious cults from brainwashing innocent people? Why not open  
church courts for the inspection by the worldly juridical system?'

In this interrogative sentence the speaker asks whether there are good reasons not to do the infinitive action in a counterfactual world. This sentence has a rhetorical character, that is, the speaker indirectly asserts that it would be good to realize the infinitive action. Note that in this sentence the speaker can, among other things, be associated with the infinitive agent ('why wouldn't we/ one'). Maurice (1996: 154) argues that such a reading is not possible in the following sentence:

- (322) **Menja ne xudo by sprosit'**. Ved' ja ej neskol'ko srodni (...). (Maurice, 1996: 154:  
Griboedov)  
me not badly IRR ask-INF-PERF. since I for.her some akin (...)  
'It wouldn't be bad if they asked me, after all I am somehow related to her.'

In this sentence, however, the predicate of the sentence is not the infinitive but the adverb *xudo*, as such this sentence cannot be seen as an infinitive sentence. A generic reading is possible, however, in the following sentences with the restrictive particle *lish'* ('just') and *tol'ko* ('only'):

- (323) **Ljudi pridumyvali sebe poroki i izvrashchenija, lish' by ne proslyt'** presnymi. (Bricyn,  
1990: 293/ A. Tolstoj)

---

<sup>163</sup> [http://apolresearch.org/reed7\\_lat.html](http://apolresearch.org/reed7_lat.html)

people invented for.self flaws and perversions, only IRR not be.reputed.for-INF-PERF  
 vapidly  
 'People invented flaws and perversions themselves, just not to be reputed for their  
 vapidly.'

- (324) Ja s uvazheniem k nemu [= Javlinskij] odnosus', no ja schitaju, chto vechnaja  
 oppozicija, i vechnye 5 procentov – **lish' by tol'ko ne brat'** na sebja otvetstvennost',  
**lish' by ne uchastvovat'** vo vlasti – èto vazhno.<sup>164</sup>  
 (...) PRT IRR only not take-INF-IMPERF on him responsibility, only IRR not participate  
 in power (...)  
 'I have great respect for self, but in my opinion, the never-ending opposition, and the  
 everlasting 5 percent, just not to take responsibility, just not to participate in the power, is  
 important.'
- (325) [D]ja, esli net svezhej [somlevshaja vishnja], možno iz varen'ja pozaimstvovat' ili iz  
 kompota, **tol'ko potom ne zabyt' by ee nazad vernut'**.<sup>165</sup>  
 (...), only afterwards not forget-INF-PERF IRR her back bring  
 'Yes, if there are no fresh ones, you can take some from jam or compote, only don't  
 forget to put some back afterwards.'

Such sentences do not express wish or desire by the speaker, but the wish or desire of the  
 agents associated with the non-expressed infinitive agent. In the first two sentences these  
 agents are specifically given in the preceding context, whereas in (325) the non-expressed  
 infinitive agent can be associated with the addressee. Maurice (1996: 154) follows Bricyn  
 (1990, 293), who classifies such sentences as goal-oriented constructions, but in my  
 opinion such an analysis is not correct for all cases, e.g. not for (325).

### (iii) Restrictive particles

Sentences with a first person, or without expressed agent, where the non-expressed  
 infinitive agent is associated with the speaker often occur with the restrictive particle *tol'ko*  
 ('only') that modifies the infinitive:

- (326) **Tol'ko by uspet'!** (Bricyn, 1990: 247/ G. Nikitina)  
 only IRR arrive.in.time-INF-PERF

<sup>164</sup> <http://www.kirienko.ru:8085/interview/kir3.html>

<sup>165</sup> <http://www.anekdot.ru:8084/d85.html>

'If only I would succeed!'

- (327) No ja vse-taki nadejus', chto v Rossii im [the west] ne oblomitsja. **Nam by tol'ko** za um vzjat'sja.<sup>166</sup>  
(...) we-DAT IRR only to senses take-INF-PERF  
'Yet I hope that Russia will not give it [resources] away to them. I wish we would come to our senses.'
- (328) **Nam by tol'ko dvinut'** ètot jashchik. (Maurice, 1996: 155/ Mickey Mouse)  
we-DAT IRR only move-INF-PERF that box  
'We only want to move that box.'

In sentences without a dative such as (326) the particle *tol'ko* modifies the infinitive sentence. Since no agent is expressed, the infinitive agent is associated with the speaker. Without context such a phrase just expresses the 'bare' scene where only the infinitive situation is realized, but in its context the phrase is interpreted as that the speaker wishes the realization of this situation. This interpretation is highly conventionalized, such that it can be seen as part of the meaning of the construction. Note that this use of *tol'ko* is a general phenomenon in the Russian language (*esli tol'ko, pust' tol'ko*), and also in other languages (e.g. *if only ...*).<sup>167</sup>

Besides with the particle *tol'ko*, the DI-construction with *by* also occurs with the restrictive particle *lish'*, as in the sentences below:

- (329) I pust' v rezul'tate obizhaetsja na menja Vasil'ev, **mne lish' by ne profanirovat'** sistemu.<sup>168</sup>  
(...) I-DAT only IRR not profane-INF-IMPERF system  
'I don't care if Vasil'ev is insulted as a result of this, I just don't want to profane the system.'
- (330) Vrjad li torgovcev dopuskajut prjamo v dom. – **Nam lish' by projti vorota!**<sup>169</sup> (J. Nikitin, *Svjatoj Graal'*)  
(...) we-DAT only IRR pass-INF-PERF gate

---

<sup>166</sup> <http://www.forum.msk.ru:8084/files/990615092251.gb.html>

<sup>167</sup> Similar particles that occur with this construction are *tot'* and the adverb *skoree*, which indicates an impatient wish (Bricyn, 1990: 247)

<sup>168</sup> <http://www.theatre.ru:8084/ptzh/2000/20/060.html>

<sup>169</sup> [http://www.pool-7.ru/moshkow/lat/NIKITINYU/graal\\_1.txt](http://www.pool-7.ru/moshkow/lat/NIKITINYU/graal_1.txt)

“The merchants will probably not let us into the house directly.” “But we just want to pass the gate!”

Sentences with the particle *isb'* express a modest wish. The difference between this construction and constructions with *tol'ko* must be attributed to a difference in meaning between these particles.

(iv) Negative sentences

The infinitive construction with *by* also occurs with negation; in such cases the infinitive situation is negated. For the analysis of sentences with negation it is important to look at the aspect of the infinitive. In sentences with a perfective infinitive the speaker considers a hypothetical state of affairs that would be bad for him and expresses an apprehension that this bad thing might happen. Sentences like these express a desire to do something to prevent the undesirable state of affairs; below some examples are given, all without dative:

- (331) **Ne zabyt' by**, kak nazyvaetsja dachnyj poselok na peschanoj kose, u kotorogo zakonchilas' vojna. (Uppsala corpus)  
not forget-INF-PERF IRR, how call-REFL dacha settlement on sand spit, at which ended war  
'We mustn't forget, what the dacha settlement on the sandy spit is called, where the war ended.'
- (332) **Ne popast' by**, dumaju, pod motor. (Zoshchenko, 1935)  
not end.up-INF-PERF IRR, I.think, under motor  
'I hope I won't end up under the motor, I thought.'
- (333) **Ne otstavaj, ne opozdat' by** k obedu. (B. Pasternak, *Postoronnij*)  
not stay.behind-IMP, not be.late-INF-PERF IRR to dinner  
'Come on, move, we don't want to be late for dinner.'

In the above the speaker is associated with the potential agent of the infinitive; the following sentences have a more generic character:

- (334) I sootvetstvenno projavljaem solidarnost' s "xoroshimi" i vojuem s temi, kto zashchishchaet "ploix". **Ne zabyt' by poschitat'**, s kakoj storony bol'she otrezannyx golov, chtoby znat', kto xuzhe.<sup>170</sup>  
(...) not forget-INF-PERF IRR count (...)  
'And in the same vain we proclaim solidarity with the "good" ones, and make war with those that protect the "bad". Of course one shouldn't forget to count the number of heads that are cut off in order to find out who is worse.'
- (335) Analogichno stroim sobach'ju konuru na dache. **Ne zabyt' by tol'ko dyrku ostavit' ne sverxu, a v stene.** A to sobaka, pozhaluj, Vas ne pojmet.<sup>171</sup>  
(...) not forget-INF-PERF IRR just hole leave not on.top, but in wall. (...)  
'In the same way we build a dog-kennel at the dacha. Just don't forget to leave a hole in the wall, and not on top. Or else the dog will probably not understand you.'

Negative sentences can also occur with a dative, e.g.:

- (336) "Nel'zja, chtoby v starosti chelovek ostavalsja odin, – dumal on. – Odnako èto neizbezno. **Ne zabyt' by mne s'est' tunca,** pokuda on ne protux, ved' mne nel'zja terjat' sily. **Ne zabyt' by mne s'est' ego utrom,** dazhe esli ja sovsem ne budu goloden. **Tol'ko by ne zabyt'**", – povtorjal on sebe.<sup>172</sup> (È. Xeminguej, *Starik i more*)  
(...) not forget-INF-PERF IRR I-DAT eat-INF-PERF tuna (...). not forget-INF-PERF IRR I-DAT eat-INF-PERF him in.morning, (...). just IRR not forget-INF-PERF (...).  
"One shouldn't stay alone when one is old", he thought. "But it is inevitable. I shouldn't forget to eat tuna, as long as it has not gone off, since I may not loose strength. I shouldn't forget to eat it in the morning, even when I am not hungry. I just don't want to forget", he repeated to himself.'
- (337) **Mne by tol'ko teper' do konca ne raskryt'sja (...).**<sup>173</sup> (A. Tarkovskij)  
I-DAT IRR only now till end not open-INF-PERF  
'I just do not want to open myself up before the end.'

In my opinion, sentences without dative express the wish that a situation will (not) happen, with the provision that in reality the situation might in fact very well happen. In sentences with a dative the apprehension that a bad thing might very well happen,

---

<sup>170</sup> <http://www.forum.msk.ru:8084/files/guestbook-po990327.html>

<sup>171</sup> <http://www.cityline.ru:8084/soveti/9a.html>

<sup>172</sup> <http://www.moshkow.pp.ru:5000/lat/INPROZ/HEMINGUEJ/starik.txt>

<sup>173</sup> [http://www.ruthenia.ru:8085/60s/tarkovskij/mne\\_by.htm](http://www.ruthenia.ru:8085/60s/tarkovskij/mne_by.htm)

and the idea that one should do something to prevent it, seems less strong. Sentences with dative, show more similarities to deontic-ontic cases of the DI-construction, where the speaker expresses the necessity to do a situation, whereas sentences without dative are infinitive sentences where the feature of wish is contributed by the context.

The aspect of the construction under discussion can be motivated as follows. The speaker focuses on the absence of completion of the situation, since this completion is associated with negative consequences. For such a reading the *perfective* aspect is typical.

In sentences with the imperfective aspect the speaker expresses (i) his wish that a necessity to do a situation in the future would be absent or (ii) the wish that a past undesirable situation would not have occurred, but that, instead, the infinitive situation would have occurred. The particle *by* expresses that the situation where there is an external force that directs the agent toward the situation is seen as counterfactual: on an ideal level the infinitive situation occurs/ occurred, but in reality the action will not/ did not occur:

- (338) **Ne vstavat' by mne** zavtra rano!  
 not get.up-INF-IMPERF IRR I-DAT tomorrow early  
 'I shouldn't have to get up early to tomorrow.'
- (339) **Ne otkryvat' by emu** okno! (Mets, 1985)  
 not open-INF-IMPERF IRR he-DAT door!  
 'He shouldn't have opened the window.'

The aspectual choice in this construction can be motivated as follows. In sentences where the infinitive situation is associated with a future event, the speaker focuses on the fact that the dative participant should not *engage* in the infinitive situation and uses the imperfective aspect; such sentences show close similarities to deontic-ontic necessitive cases without *by*. In the case of a situation that has already occurred, the completion of the situation is a given fact; in this case the speaker focuses on the occurrence of the situation *qua* situation, and uses the *imperfective* aspect.

(v) The aspect of the infinitive

In the construction under discussion the infinitive occurs in both the perfective and the imperfective. The difference in aspectual choice points at a difference in conceptualization and profiling. In the case of the perfective the emphasis is placed on the positive consequences of the realization of the infinitive situation, whereas in the

case of the imperfective aspect the emphasis is placed on the occurrence of the situation *qua situation*, or the fact that the dative participant is to *engage* in the infinitive situation. A reason to choose the imperfective aspect may be to emphasize the duration of the situation:

(340) – Èx, slavnoe mesto! – skazal filosof. – Vot tut **by zhit', lovit'** rybu v Dnepru i v prudax, **oxotit'sja** s tentami ili s ruzh'em za strepetami i krol'shnepami. (Garde, 1963: 58/ Gogol')

O, heavenly place! – said philosopher – PRT here IRR live-INF-IMPERF, catch-INF-IMPERF fish in Dnepr and in ponds, hunt-INF-IMPERF with awnings or with arms after little bustards and curlews

“O, what a heavenly place!”, said the philosopher. “If only I could live here, catch fish in the Dnepr and in ponds, hunt with arms after little bustards and curlews.”

In the case of inherently perfective actions (e.g. semelfactives), or inherently imperfective actions (e.g. states) the difference in profiling is directed by the meaning of the lexical item itself. In some cases a difference in aspect strongly correlates with different usage types. This is the case for example with negative sentences as discussed above.

(vi) The word order

In the construction under discussion both the [infinitive dative] and [dative infinitive] order occur. I suspect that the [infinitive dative] order must be motivated in the same way as in the case of sentences without *by*. For an analysis see the preceding sections.

(vii) Conditional sentence structure

In some cases the infinitive occurs in a coordinate sentence with a conditional character:

(341) **Ej by učit'sja**, ona by mnogo dostigla (Bricyn, 1990: 242/ A. Tvardovskij)  
she-DAT IRR study-INF-IMPERF, she IRR much achieved  
'Had she studied, she would have achieved a lot.'

In such sentences it is expressed that the dative participant should have realized/ should realize the infinitive action, because the infinitive action would have led/ would lead to a desirable situation, which is expressed in a clause following the infinitive clause.

#### 4.13.3 Type III: Sentences with *tol'ko* or *vse* where the external force is the dative participant

In the cases above the speaker wishes the realization of the action expressed by the infinitive. An exception to this rule occurs in some cases with *tol'ko* ('only'), *lish'*, or *vse* ('all') In these cases the second or third person dative subject wishes to do just *one* thing (with an imperfective 'all the time'), namely to do the infinitive situation:

- (342) **Tebe by vse pit' da zhrat'.** (Maurice, 1996: 162/ Popov)  
you-DAT irrealis all the time drink-INF-IMPERF and eat-INF-IMPERF  
'If it were up to you, you would eat and drink all the time.'
- (343) **Da ladno tebe, Vasja, – xlopnul ego po plechu vtoroj, s prokurennym golosom. – Tebe by tol'ko zuby skalit'.** Idem luchshe.<sup>174</sup> (V. Maksimov, *Popolznovenie*)  
PRT enough you, Vasja, – tapped him on shoulders second, with smoked voice. – you-DAT IRR only teeth show-INF-IMPERF we.go better  
“Well, enough Vasja”, said the second of the two men with a smoker’s voice while tapping him on the shoulder. “You only want to have a good laugh. We ‘d better go.”
- (344) **Kot Kornej uzhasnyj sonja. Spit celyi den'! Emu by tol'ko spat' i spat'!**<sup>175</sup>  
cat Kornej terribly sleepy. sleeps all day! he-DAT IRR only sleep and sleep  
'The cat Kornei is terribly sleepy. He sleeps all day! He just wants to sleep all the time.'
- (345) **Nakinuv na golovu shlem, Aurel tronul motocikl s mesta i molniej vynesja so dvora. Teper' emu by tol'ko vyrvat'sja na trassu (...).**<sup>176</sup> (V. Vasil'ev, *Serdca i motory*).  
put.on.GERUND on head helmet, Aurel touched motor from place and as.lightning take.out-GERUND from courtyard. now he-DAT IRR only break.away-INF-PERF on route  
'After putting on his helmet, Aurel moved his motor from its place and took off from the courtyard, as fast as lightning. Now he only wanted to break away and go on the route.'

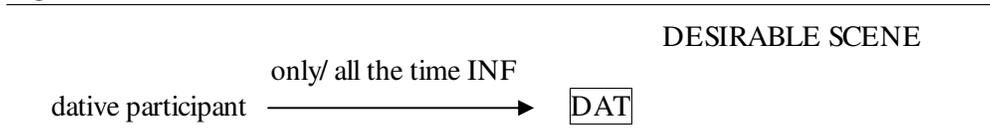
In these sentences it is expressed that the dative participant wants only one thing, viz. the realization of the infinitive action; see figure 4.24.

<sup>174</sup> <http://www.litera.ru:8085/slova/maximov/popolz.html>

<sup>175</sup> <http://www.sm.ru:8085/detset/arseniy/cat/index.htm>

<sup>176</sup> [http://www.r-isp.net/library/lat/WASILXEW/hear\\_eng.txt](http://www.r-isp.net/library/lat/WASILXEW/hear_eng.txt)

Figure 4.24



In sentences with second persons the speaker often expresses his discontent with this wish of the dative participant. Such a reading is not typical of cases with a third person. In the case of third persons the speaker may identify with the dative participant and, from the perspective of this participant, express the wish to realize the infinitive situation. Such sentences can be paraphrased with modal predicates or constructions such as *udat'sja* ('to succeed'), *esli by on smog* ('If only he could'), or *dovestis'* ('to manage'). An example given below:

- (346) *Imeja v svoem rasporejzhenii polnuju moshchnost', on eshche mog by zatormozit' i uiti v prostranstvo, tol'ko by emu nabrat' èti samye sto g.*<sup>177</sup>(S. Lem, *Doznanie*)  
having in his order full power, he still could IRR brake and leave in space, just IRR he-DAT gather-INF-PERF that same hundred g.  
'Since the order gave him full power, he could still put on the brakes and leave for space, if he would only succeed in gathering that same hundred g.'

In this sentences *tol'ko* modifies the proposition expressed by the combination of the infinitive and the dative: they have [*tol'ko* dative infinitive] order; this differs from the sentences given above, where we find a [dative *tol'ko* infinitive] order.

Below I will briefly discuss the interpretation of this construction. The interpretation of such sentences is accounted for in Figure 4.25.

Figure 4.25

---

**x is the recipient of a situation type Y; i.e. Y is not initiated by x**

+ *syntactic-semantic features*:

- (i) The particle *by* occurs.
- (ii) The infinitive may be imperfective or perfective.

---

<sup>177</sup> <http://moshkov.perm.ru/lat/LEM/inquest.txt>

- (iii) Occurrence of the forms *tol'keo*, *lish'* or *vse* that modify the infinitive, or the combination of the dative and the infinitive.
- (iv) Y can be negated.
- (v) x occurs in the second or third person.
- (vi) The dative occurs before the infinitive.

*Interpretation:*

In these sentences it is expressed that if it were up to the dative participant, the dative participant would be the recipient of just one action, viz. the infinitive action:

The dative participant would like to do/ be completely satisfied with only the infinitive action Y

---

Below I will briefly discuss some of the contextual features given in Figure 4.25.

(i) The particle *by*

The particle *by* occurs because in such sentences the occurrence of the infinitive action does not take place in this world, but only in an ideal world. This ideal world is defined by the wish or urge of the dative participant.

(ii) Aspect

The infinitive may be imperfective or perfective. The imperfective aspect is typical of cases where the speaker disagrees with the kind of behavior, indicated by the infinitive, whereas the perfective aspect is typical of cases where the speaker identifies with the wish of the dative participant to realize a single event.

(iii) Restrictive forms

The interpretation where the dative participant can be seen as the external force only occurs with the forms *tol'keo* (*lish'*), that indicate that the agent wants to do just this one action. Maurice gives an example with *vse*; in this sentence it is expressed that the agent wants to do one action all the time (and as such focuses on one action).

(vi) Word order

In the case of the interpretation under discussion we find the following arrangements (i) [dative [*tol'ko* infinitive]], and (ii) [*tol'ko* [dative infinitive]]. The first arrangement reflects the point of view of the dative participant. Note that the same order also occurs in sentences where the speaker can be seen as the force that assigns the infinitive situation:

- (347) **Nam** by *tol'ko dvinut'* ètot jashchik. (Maurice, 1996: 155/ Mickey Mouse)  
we-DAT IRR only move-INF-PERF that box  
'We only want to move that box.'

In cases where the narrator identifies with the third person dative participant, *tol'ko* modifies the combination of the dative and the infinitive. This use of *tol'ko* is similar to cases that express wish or desire in infinitive sentences without a dative, or in expressions with *esli* or *pust'*.

#### 4.14 Directive infinitive use

In this section I will briefly discuss the directive use of the infinitive. The infinitive can be used as a directive in sentences without dative where the non-expressed infinitive agent is unified with a contextually given second person addressee. In some cases the same construction occurs with a dative, usually with the forms *vsem* (all-DAT) and *nikomu* (no-one-DAT). Directive infinitives can be seen as special instances of the DI-construction. I will therefore briefly discuss them here.

In Russian the directive infinitive is prototypically used for two functions:

- (i) As an order or command, or strong urge.
- (ii) In cases where the identity of the non-expressed infinitive agent remains unspecified ('one').

Examples of the first type can be found below:

- (348) **Molchat'**, idiotki! – rjavknul Xvastishchev. (V. Aksenov, *Ozibog*)  
be.silent-INF-IMPERF, idiots – barked Xvastishchev  
'“Quiet, you stupid girls”, barked Xvastishchev.'

- (349) Ne **smet'**! – javno bol'nym golosom voskliknul Filipp Filippovich.<sup>178</sup> (M. Bulgakov, *Sobach'e serdce*)  
not dare-INF-PERF! – clearly with.sick voice shouted Filip Filippovich  
'“Don't you dare!”, shouted Filip Filippovich with a clearly sore voice.'
- (350) Ne **streljat'**! (K. Paustovskij, *Nachalo nevedomogo veka*)  
not shoot-INF-IMPERF  
'Don't shoot!'
- (351) – Teper' raketa gotova k poletu. Zavtra utrom vlykuchim nevesomost' i otbuksiruem kosmeticheskij korabl' na startovuju plochshadku. A sejchas **spat'**. (N. Nosov, *Neznanka na Lune*)  
(...) but now sleep-INF-IMPERF  
'Now the rocket is ready to take off. Tomorrow morning we will switch on the zero gravity and tow off the space ship to the take-off place. But now – sleep.'

This use of the infinitive is typical of the order of an officer to a soldier, a human to his dog, or a parent to his child. The term 'order' does not apply equally well to all cases. It is typical of infinitive directives that the speaker does not take the possibility of the addressee refusing to perform the infinitive action into account. In some cases the directivity has the character of a binding statement, as in (352):

- (352) – Ladno, – govorit Dimka, – berem tebja s toboj. Tol'ko **ne xnykat'** potom. (Ch. Ajmatov, *Posle skazki*)  
O.K. says Dimka, we.take you with us. just not whine-INF-IMPERF afterwards  
'“O.K!”, said Dimka, “we will take you with us. But don't start whining later on.”'

If the infinitive is not uttered in the immediate speaker-addressee context, the non-expressed infinitive agent may remain unspecified, and be interpreted as the generic agent; in such cases the direction has the character of a general statement of how to behave in a certain situation. This use of the infinitive is found in the case of recipes or general instructions (Maurice, 1995: 167), e.g.:

- (353) **Prigotovit'** mjasnoj farsh s lukom, **posolit'**, **poperchit'**, **vzbit'** v nego 2 jajca, xorosho **peremeshat'**. (Maurice, 1996: 168/ Sizova)  
prepare meat mince with onion, salt-INF-PERF, pepper-INF-PERF, break.into-INF-PERF in him 2 eggs, good mix-INF-PERF

<sup>178</sup> [http://www.yuvictim.net.ru:8105/liter/bulgakov/serdce/sobsrd\\_6.html](http://www.yuvictim.net.ru:8105/liter/bulgakov/serdce/sobsrd_6.html)

*Meaning and interpretation of the DI-construction*

'Prepare the minced meat with onion, add salt, pepper, break two eggs into it, and mix it well.'

- (354) Ne vysovyvat'sja. (Proeme, *forthcoming*) Notice in the train)  
not lean.out-INF-IMPERF  
'Don't lean out.'

- (355) To'lko predstavit' chto kazhdyj iz nas – celyj mir, a obobshchat' znachit pomeshat' sebjja gde-to tam, nad mirami.<sup>179</sup>  
only imagine-INF-PERF that each of us – whole world, and generalize means hinder self somewhere there, above worlds  
'Just imagine/ one just has to imagine that each of us is a world on its own, and that generalizing means interfering with yourself, somewhere there in such a world.'

Cases where the non-expressed infinitive agent remains unspecified or generic cannot be seen as instances of the DI-construction proper.

Besides the cases where the direction is aimed at a second person addressee, the infinitive can also be used as a directive in the following contexts:

- (i) directivity to the speaker (hortative)
- (ii) directivity to a non-specified group of people

The following sentences are cases where the speaker directs himself to do an action:

- (356) Poezd stal ostanavlivat'sja. – Nikak stancija, – skazal on, – **pojti** napit'sja. (*Russkaja Grammatika*, 1980, II: 374)  
train started stop – in.no.way station, – said he, – go-INF-PERF drink-INF-PERF  
'The train started to stop. "It seems to be a station", he said, "let's go and have a drink."'
- (357) Bol'she ne mogu, podumal Peskavin. Krivjas' ot rezi v boku, on ostanovilsja i tjazhelo sel na sneg. Vse. Pobegali – xvatit. Teper' **dumat'**.<sup>180</sup>(A. Gromov, *Tekodont*)  
(...) now think-INF-IMPERF  
'"I can't go any further", thought Peskavin. He made a wry face because of the sharp pain, stopped, and sat down with difficulty in the snow. "Enough, we have to run. Now I must think."'

---

<sup>179</sup> <http://kamburova.cdru.com:8082/sharm.htm>

<sup>180</sup> [http://kulichki-lat.rambler.ru/moshkow/RUFANT/GROMOV\\_A/tekodont.txt](http://kulichki-lat.rambler.ru/moshkow/RUFANT/GROMOV_A/tekodont.txt)

- (358) **[B]ezhat', bezhat'**, – podumala Katerina. – **Bezhat'**.<sup>181</sup> (J. Mamleev; *Blazhenstvo i okajanstvo*)  
 run-INF, run-INF-IMPERF, – thought Katerina. – run-INF-IMPERF  
 “Run, run”, thought Katerina, “I have to run.”

The *Russkaja Grammatika* (1980, II: 374) describes such sentences as expressing a desired, intended action, which the subject will immediately perform. In my opinion such sentences can best be seen as directives, where the speaker can be regarded both as the potential agent, and as the impulse giver. The sentences given above display some variation in character. In (356) the speaker expresses that it would be a good idea to realize the infinitive action. I suspect that the occurrence of the perfective aspect here is connected with the fact that the speaker expresses his *wish* to realize the infinitive situation action. This means that he does not focus on the fact that he will engage in the action, but rather on the fact that he wants to realize the action. The sentences (357) and (358) cannot be seen as cases of wish. In these sentences the speaker expresses the necessity to realize the infinitive situation in the given context. The sentences under discussion do not occur with datives, and can therefore not be seen as instances of the DI-construction.<sup>182</sup>

A directive interpretation also occurs in the following sentences, where the non-expressed infinitive agent is associated with non-specified people (‘they’):

- (359) **Zarezat'** takogo starika ko vsem svin'jam! (I. Babel', 1989: 231)  
 kill-INF-PERF such an.old.man to all pigs  
 ‘They should kill the old man like a pig/ Let them kill the old man like a pig.’
- (360) **Razmenjat'** ego! – zakrichal veselym golosom paren' s xmel'nymi glazami. (K. Paustovskij, 1985: 27)  
 exchange-INF-PERF him! – shouted with.happy voice man with drunken eyes cheerfully  
 “They should exchange him!”, shouted the young man with the drunken eyes cheerfully.’

In such sentences no dative can be expressed; as such they cannot be seen as instances of the DI-construction. I will therefore not discuss them further here.

Bricyn (1990: 250–251) argues that the directive use of the infinitive can be analyzed as the complement of the finite verb *prikazyvat'* (‘order’). This means that a directive

<sup>181</sup> <http://www.rvb.ru:8090/mamleev/01prose/2stories/4folk/01-2-4-04.htm>

<sup>182</sup> In most examples given by the *Russkaja Grammatika* (1980) no dative is expressed, with the exception of (140).

infinitive like *Molchat'* (be.silent-INF) must be analyzed as a sentence where the finite verb 'order' is left away (*Ja prikazyvaju molchat'*; 'I order you to be silent.'). According to him, this analysis motivates the categorical character of many directive infinitive sentences. A weak point of the analysis, is, however, that it does not motivate *why* it is the case that the directive infinitive often has the character of an order, and *why* in some cases the directive infinitive is *not* interpreted as an order, but as a general statement or as a direction to oneself or to a non-specified group of people. As such, the analysis given by Bricyn is insufficient. I think it is better to analyze the specific use of the infinitive from the point of view of the *meaning* of the infinitive, taking into account the influence of oppositional forms such as the imperative, and the context in which the infinitive occurs. Directive infinitives can be analyzed as in Figure 4.26.

Figure 4.26

---

**Situation type Y by non-specified agent x**

+ *syntactic-semantic features*:

- (i) Y, or not Y in the case of negation, does not occur at the moment of speaking.
- (ii) Y is be interpreted as controllable.
- (iii) Y occurs in both aspects.
- (iv) The speaker can be seen as committing himself to the content of the utterance.
- (v) x can be identified with some agent present in the directive situation; in some cases a dative occurs, especially in the case of *use* ('all'), and *nikto* ('noone').
- (vi) Y is prototypically not combined with modal particles.
- (vii) Occurrence of embedded cases.

*Interpretation*:

For cases where a specific addressee is given, the interpretation can be analyzed as follows. The speaker states that in the given context action type Y is appropriate, and implicitly expresses that no other situation is the case. Since the utterance is made in the presence of an addressee, and the action type does not occur at the moment of speaking, or is thought of as not occurring at the moment of speaking, the speaker directs the addressee to realize the infinitive action, or in the case of negation, not to realize the infinitive situation:

**The speaker directs the addressee x to realize the infinitive action Y, and no other given or implied situation.**

For cases where no specific addressee is given the infinitive is used because (i) the focus is on the general validity of the situation in abstraction from a specific addressee, and/ or (ii) the idea that the addressee should do the situation is already presupposed, and the infinitive occurs in a list of situations that the addressee is to perform. In both cases the speaker directs a potential agent to perform the infinitive situation:

**The speaker directs the addressee x to realize the infinitive action Y.**

---

Below I will discuss the context as given in Figure 4.26 in more detail.

(i) The situational context

It is typical of the directive context that the action expressed by the infinitive does not occur at the moment of speaking. In Russian the infinitive is not used in contexts where the speaker is already performing the action in question; in such cases the imperative is used.

(ii) Controllability

For a discussion of controllability I refer the reader to the 3.2.2.1 on the notion of controllability of the imperative use.

(iii) Aspect

The aspect of the directive infinitive is prototypically perfective; this is connected with the fact that the speaker wants the realization of the infinitive action. In the case of negation we find the imperfective aspect.

(iv) Speaker commitment

In the case of the directive interpretation of the infinitive the speaker commits himself to wanting the realization of the infinitive situation. By using the infinitive in a directive context the speaker expresses that the infinitive situation, and no other situation, applies in the given context. In my opinion, the type character of the infinitive accounts for the fact that the infinitive cannot be used to express permission, in contrast to the imperative.

In the case of the *imperative* the speaker expresses that he wants the realization of the imperative action. In such cases, however, the initial intention to do the action may come from the addressee. In such sentences the speaker *permits* the addressee to do the infinitive action. A permissive interpretation is not possible in the case of the directive infinitive because by uttering the infinitive *the speaker* indicates which action type is appropriate in the given context. Because of this the infinitive is also appropriate to be used as an order or command. In a directive context, with a specific intonation, the speaker states that no other action than the infinitive action is appropriate.

(v) The unification of the infinitive agent with the contextually given agent

In most directive sentences there is no association of the non-expressed infinitive agent with an expressed agent. In such cases the non-expressed infinitive agent is associated with the addressee present in the speech context, the speaker, or a group of non-specified people. In some cases we find directive sentences with a dative subject. Typical of such cases is that the dative subject is a universal quantifier, viz. *vsem* (all-DAT), or *nikomu* (no-one-DAT):

- (361) **Vsem sidet'** na svoix mestax! prikazala uchitel'nica i shla vmeste s direktorom. (Proeme, *forthcoming!* Belov).  
all sit-INF-IMPERF at self places! ordered teacher and went together with director  
“Everyone stay on their places!”, ordered the teacher and went out together with the director.’
- (362) Kto bezhit? – Vasich trjaxnul nad soboj avtomatom. (...) – **Nikomu ne bezhat'**! Von pushki! (ibid. / Uppsala)  
who runs? – Vasich waved over his with.kalashnikov. no-one-DAT not run! there canons  
“Who is running away there?”Vasich waved with his kalashnikov above his head. “No-one runs away! There are the canons!”
- (363) **Nikomu ne streljat'**!<sup>183</sup> (A. Tjurin & A. Shchegolev, *Indiana Dzhons protiv Tret'ego rejssa*)  
no-one-DAT not shoot-INF-PERF  
‘No-one shoot!’

---

<sup>183</sup> <http://www.moshkow.pp.ru:5000/lat/TYURIN/indiana.txt>

The information expressed by *vsem* and *nikomu*, unlike the identity of the addressee (*tebe*), cannot be inferred from the immediate speaker-addressee context, which explains why in some cases they are expressed. In some specific cases a second person in the dative is expressed:

- (364) **Tebe – molchat’**. (...) – Ubiraj samovar.<sup>184</sup> (M. Gor’kij, *Autobiograficheskie Rasskazy, po žurnal’noj publikacii*)  
 you-DAT – be.silent-INF-IMPERF. (...) – Take.away-IMP samovar  
 “You should keep your mouth shut.” (...) “Just take away that samovar.”

In this sentence the expression of the dative can be motivated by the contrastive context in which the infinitive occurs: the speaker expresses that the dative participant should keep silent, and not talk. This sentence is close to a necessitive case; it is expressed that what the dative participant should do is the infinitive action. Maurice (1996: 168) gives the following example with a third person dative:

- (365) **Jadovityj! Krolikam v pishchu ne upotrebljat’**. (Maurice, 1996: 168/ Mickey Mouse)<sup>185</sup>  
 poisoned! rabbits-DAT for food not use-INF-IMPERF  
 ‘It is poisoned! The rabbits shouldn’t use it as food.’

This sentence is not a typical directive case because the dative is a third person instead of a second person. The sentence cannot, however, be seen as a case of (de)ontic or ontic necessity (‘The rabbits don’t have to use it as food’). Sentences like these are exceptional.

Directive use of the infinitive further occurs with nominative subjects (with a pause between the subject and the infinitive):

- (366) **Čto ja xochu, to i govorju, a ty – molchat’!** (Maurice, 1996: 169/ Chexov)  
 what I want, that and say, but you – be.silent-INF-IMPERF  
 ‘I’ll say what I want, and you – be quiet!’

This use can be seen as an instance of the nominative-infinitive construction (see 4.4.3).

<sup>184</sup> <http://www.magister.msk.ru:8085/library/prose/gorky002.htm>

<sup>185</sup> Perhaps the dative in this case is not a dative subject but a benefactive subject (‘It is poisonous. One shouldn’t use it as food for the rabbits.’)

(vi) Particles

The infinitive is prototypically not used with particles such as *-ka*. The following sentence can be seen as an exception to that rule:

- (367) Ili bukval'no neskol'ko chekannyx fraz na zasedanii pravitel'stvo: a **podat'**-ka sjuda Gruziju da vvesti s nej vizovyj rezhim! (Moskovskije Novosti, 9-15 nov. 1999)  
and literally some precise phrases on meeting government: but give-INF-PERF PRT here Georgia and introduce-INF-PERF with her visa policy  
'And here are some literal phrases from the meeting of the government: well just bring Georgia here and introduce a visa policy there.'

(vii) Embedded infinitives

Infinitives with a directive interpretation also occur in embedded contexts:

- (368) Skazal, chto vremja emu strashno dorogo, poètomu – **ne opazdyvat'**.<sup>186</sup>  
he.said, that time him terribly expensive, because.of.that – not be.late-INF-IMPERF  
'He said that his time was terribly expensive, and therefore we should not be late.'

The occurrence of embedded infinitives with a directive interpretation shows that the directive feature is not part of the meaning of the infinitive, as in the case of the imperative, but is rather an interpretation.

#### 4.15 Interrogatives without interrogative adverbs and pronouns

Besides the occurrence of the DI-construction in interrogative sentences with interrogative adverbs and pronouns, the infinitive predicate can occur in interrogatives without such interrogative forms where the speaker can be seen as the non-expressed infinitive agent, and where the speaker offers to realize the infinitive situation and asks whether the addressee is OK with this proposed realization, e.g.:

- (369) **Nalit'** tebe eshche? – Ne dozhidajas' soglasija, on razlivaet brendi.<sup>187</sup> (A. & B. Strugackie, *Tucha*)

---

<sup>186</sup> <http://www.anekdot.ru:8084/an/an9908/t990808.html>

<sup>187</sup> <http://www.moshkow.pp.ru:5000/lat/STRUGACKIE/tucha.txt>

pour you-DAT still? – not waiting permission, he pours.out brandy  
 “‘Shall I pour you some more?’ Without waiting for his answer, he pours out the brandy.’

- (370) Poroshkov, mozhët, tebe dat’? (A. Zoshchenko, 1935)  
 powders, maybe, you-DAT give-INF-PERF”  
 ‘Do you want me to give you some powders?’

This use of the infinitive is typical of contexts where the speaker wants to engage in a situation that affects the addressee, or that might interest the addressee, and therefore asks the addressee whether he agrees with the realization of the infinitive situation; in such contexts the addressee prototypically answers with yes or no. The aspect of such sentences is usually perfective, but may be imperfective in the case of negation, and if the occurrence of the action is known as such and the speaker focuses on the engagement in the action (*‘pristup k dejstviu’*), or in the case of ‘open repetition’ (see Maurice, 1995: 194 – 205). The infinitive use under discussion occurs without expressed potential subject; the non-expressed infinitive agent is associated with the speaker.<sup>188</sup> The absence of a dative may be motivated because (i) the speaker is given in the context, and (ii) the focus is on the question of whether the infinitive situation *will be the case* or not, and not on the question of force (‘I am under the influence of a force that compels me to do X). The construction under discussion can be seen as an instance of the class of infinitive sentences, and not as an instance of the DI-construction proper. I will not discuss these here, but I refer the reader to Maurice (1995: 194 – 205) for a further overview and discussion.

Another construction that I will not discuss is the construction with the interrogative particle *li*. Following Maurice (1996: 206), two types can be distinguished:

Ne + *infinitive<sub>perfective</sub>* + li

- (371) **Ne poslat’ li nam** v Madrid palladina Nassau-Zigena dlja peregovorov (...)?<sup>189</sup> (V. Pikul’, *Favorit*)  
 not send-INF-PERF PRT we-DAT to Madrid palladine Nassau-Zigen for negotiations?  
 ‘Shouldn’t we send the paladin Nassau-Zigena to Madrid for negotiations?’

<sup>188</sup> Maurice (1996: 194) claims that a dative subject occurs in some cases, but I have not attested examples of such sentences.

<sup>189</sup> <http://lib.nordnet.ru/lat/PIKULX/favorit2.txt>

- (372) Byl period posle otstavki, kogda ja ser'ezno dumal, **ne vernut'sja li mne** na proizvodstvo.<sup>190</sup>  
was period after resignation, when I seriously thought, not go.back-INF-PERF PRT I-DAT in industry  
'There was a period after my resignation, when I seriously wondered whether it wasn't a good idea to go back to the industry.'

*Other structures*

- (373) Da **mne li** Vam ob'jasnjat'?<sup>191</sup>  
PRT I-DAT PRT you-DAT explain-INF-IMPERF  
'Why should I explain this to you? [because you already know it]'
- (374) Grif Rift skazal ej o chajke, letjashchej v nochnom uragane, – **emu li ne znat'**!<sup>192</sup> (I. Efremov, *Chas byka*)  
(...); he-DAT PRT not know-INF-IMPERF  
'Grif Rift told her about the seagull, flying in the nighttime hurricane; as if he didn't know about that! [of course he knew]'

In cases with the structure: [*ne* infinitive<sub>perfective</sub> *li*] the speaker proposes to realize the infinitive situation. These sentences have the following structure: (a) The speaker thinks that Y might be a good idea, but does not have enough information to be sure about this (Baranov & Kobozeva: 1983: 272), or is not in the position to assert that this is the case; (b) the speaker asks the addressee whether Y is a good idea (or: Sp asks addressee whether the dative participant is the recipient of 'Y'; that is, whether the dative participant should realize the infinitive situation)<sup>193</sup>; (c) the speaker expects the addressee to say that 'Y' is a good idea. Such sentences can be paraphrased with *mozhet* + infinitive (Bricyn, 1990: 268). The dative in this construction is triggered because the speaker asks the addressee whether he agrees that the (appropriate) way things go is such that the dative participant should engage in the realization of the infinitive situation; in this case the ontic character of the DI-construction is supported by the initial information state (a).

---

<sup>190</sup> <http://www.kirienko.ru:8085/interview/index.html>

<sup>191</sup> <http://www.anekdot.ru:8084/d22.html>

<sup>192</sup> <http://lib.nordnet.ru/lat/EFREMOW/chas.txt>

<sup>193</sup> Note that the speaker and the addressee may be the same person (e.g. in (372)).

A different interpretation is at stake in (373) and (374). In these sentences the force that assigns the infinitive situation to the dative participant can also be identified with the (appropriate) way things go. In (373) the ontic nature of the DI-construction is supported by the fact that the speaker contradicts the idea that he would have to engage in the action (this negative attitude explains the use of the imperfective aspect), and in (374) the ontic nature is supported by the fact that the speaker thinks that the idea that the dative participant might not be the recipient of the infinitive situation is nonsense.

#### 4.16 Related constructions

In this section I will present constructions that can be seen as related to the DI-construction, or special instances of the DI-construction.

##### 4.16.1 Sentences with a quantificational modification (*dolgo*)

I will briefly discuss infinitive sentences with a verb of motion and a quantificational modification; such as the following:

*Verbs of motion infinitives as topics/ subjects with quantificational modification*

- (375) **Exat'** bylo nedolgo. (Maurice, 1996: 125/ Dostoevskij)  
drive-INF-IMPERF was-IMPERS notlong  
'We didn't have to drive for a long time.'
- (376) **Idti** bylo dvednadcat' kilometrov. (Maurice, 1996: 125/ Kazakov)  
drive-INF-IMPERF was-IMPERS twelve kilometers  
'We had to drive for twelve kilometers.'
- (377) "Vitja, a xochesh' ja tebe rasskazhu, kak ja èkzameny sdaval?" Vitja, ponimaja, chto **exat' dolgo** i pridetsja slushat', kivaet.<sup>194</sup>  
(...), that ride-INF-IMPERF long (...)  
'"Vitja, you want me to tell how I did my exam?" Vitja, who understood that it would take a long time to get there, and that he had to listen, nods.'

---

<sup>194</sup> <http://www.anekdot.ru:8084/story-month-0001.html>

*Meaning and interpretation of the DI-construction*

- (378) **Exat' mne bylo dolgo** i, vskore, ja uzhe privyk, chto na ostanovkax, vdol' marshrutki sobiralis' gruppki ljudej, siljashchixsja v po t'max razgljadet', kuda zhe on, vse taki, edet.<sup>195</sup>  
ride-INF I-DAT was-NEUT long-ADV (...)  
'I had to drive a long way, and soon I was already accustomed to the fact that at the stops groups of people gathered at the taxi bus, trying to find out in the dark, what its destination was.'

*DI-construction with verbs of motions and quantificational modification*

- (379) **Dochen'ka, kupi ogurcy, tebe zhe eshche dolgo exat'.**<sup>196</sup>  
daughter, buy-IMP pickles, you-DAT PRT still long-ADV go-INF-IMPERF  
'Little girl, buy some pickles, you still have to ride a long way.'

*DI-construction and quantificational modification with other verbs*

- (380) – **Dolgo tebe sidet'?** – Poka mama ne pridet. – A ran'she nikak nel'zja vyjti?<sup>197</sup>(V. Krapivin)  
long-ADV you-DAT sit-INF-IMPERF? (...)  
“Do you have to stay here for a long time?” “Till mama comes back.” “And you may not leave earlier at all?”
- (381) **Emu nedolgo zhit'.**<sup>198</sup> (E. Xaekaja. *Vozvrashchenie v Axen*)  
he-DAT not.long live-INF-IMPERF  
'He won't live long.'
- (382) **Esli tak, zhit' tebe dolgo.**<sup>199</sup> (S. Pavlov, *Lunnaja raduga*).  
if so, live-INF-IMPERF you long  
'If so, you will live long.'
- (383) **Emu dolgo ne uvidet' beregov.**<sup>200</sup> (D. Skiruk, *Osennij lis*)  
he-DAT long not see-INF-PERF shores  
'He won't see the shores for a long time.'

---

<sup>195</sup> <http://www.anekdot.ru:8084/an/an9811/o981113.html>

<sup>196</sup> [http://lat.www.citycat.ru/funny/fido/1999\\_03/23.html](http://lat.www.citycat.ru/funny/fido/1999_03/23.html)

<sup>197</sup> [http://sf.glasnet.ru:8105/vk/book/ta\\_storona\\_gde\\_veter/ta\\_storona\\_gde\\_veter\\_2\\_03.htm](http://sf.glasnet.ru:8105/vk/book/ta_storona_gde_veter/ta_storona_gde_veter_2_03.htm)

<sup>198</sup> <http://kulichki-lat.rambler.ru/moshkow/HAECKAQ/conquer2.txt>

<sup>199</sup> <http://kulichki-lat.rambler.ru/moshkow/PAWLOW/raduga1.txt>

<sup>200</sup> [http://lat.www.vladivostok.com/Speaking\\_In\\_Tongues/AutumnFox/AutumnFox5.html](http://lat.www.vladivostok.com/Speaking_In_Tongues/AutumnFox/AutumnFox5.html)

Maurice (1996: 124–126) notes that modal infinitive sentences with a verb of motion and a quantificational modification have a different *semantic* structure than the other necessitive uses of the DI-construction; she argues that in contrast to regular cases of the DI-construction, these sentences express notions in-between necessity and possibility. In sentences where the infinitive occurs as the topic of the sentence, one can speak of *utilitarian* or *technical* necessity (see Shatunovskij, 1996: 240 for an overview of different types of necessity); these sentences have the following structure: in order to achieve Y, X is necessary. In these cases the necessitive reading is only arrived at *indirectly* in the sense that the meaning of ‘as far as Y is concerned, it was Z’ is interpreted against the background of the presupposition that one wants to get somewhere.

In my opinion, it is also important to look at the different *syntactic* structure, and distinguish between cases where the infinitive can be seen as the topic of the sentence, such as (375) and (377), and other cases, such as (379), where the infinitive is not the topic. Sentences where the infinitive functions as a topic cannot be seen as instances of the DI-construction proper. Typical of these latter cases are the following features, which set them apart from regular deontic interpretations of the DI-construction:

- In many cases no dative participant is expressed; in such sentences the identity of the infinitive subject remains unspecified or is contextually given.
- The infinitive is prototypically imperfective.
- There seems to be no restrictions on the expression of the copula.

Note that in the case of the construction under discussion, the negation cannot be placed before the copula, but is placed before the quantificational modification:

(384) Idti (\*ne) bylo (ne)dolgo.  
go-INF-IMPERF (not) was-IMPERS not.long  
‘It didn’t take long to get there.’

(385) Idti (\*ne) bylo ne 20 kilometrov, a tridcat’ kilometrov.  
go-INF-IMPERF (not) was-IMPERS not 20 kilometers, but 30 kilometers  
‘The ride wasn’t 20 kilometers, but 30 kilometers.’

I do not think that this phenomenon should be compared to the fact that *byl'ol budet* cannot be negated in the case of the DI-construction.<sup>201</sup>

The sentences under discussion cannot be seen as infinitive sentences; that is, sentences where the infinitive may be seen as the predicate of the sentence, and where a dative may be expressed as the experiencer of the adverbial predicate. In my opinion it would be better to treat the quantificational modification (*dolgo*) as the predicate in these sentences. Such sentences are related to constructions such as the following, where *dolgo* must be seen as the predicate of the sentence, and the infinitive as the subject of the verb *byt'*:

- (386) Dolgo bylo pro vse rasskazyvat'.<sup>202</sup> (V. Krapivin, *Boltik*)  
long was-IMPERS about everything tell-INF-IMPERF  
'It had taken much time to tell everything.'

Sentences with a dative where the infinitive is not the topic of the sentence have a different structure. These sentences must be seen as instances of the DI-construction. In these sentences the adverb modifies the infinitive, e.g.:

[[Emu [nedolgo<sub>modifier</sub> [zhit']<sub>predicate</sub>]] → 'He won't live long.'

Note, however, that such sentences show similarities to sentences where the adverb must be seen as the predicate of the sentence with a dative subject, and where the infinitive must be seen as the subject of the verb *byt'*. If someone experiences a situation as long, this means that the situation is characterized as having the property long. Extensionally there is no difference between the adverb as a modification of the infinitive situation, and the adverb as a predicate.<sup>203</sup> Semantically and syntactically, however, the readings are different.

---

<sup>201</sup> One might say that *nedolgo* can be seen as one conceptual entity. I would suggest that this can be motivated by the semantics of *dolgo*. The negation of *dolgo* (*nedolgo*) can be seen as the antonym of *dolgo* ('short'). This is not the case with adverbs like *veselo* ('veselo'); the antonymy structure of an adverb like *veselo* is much more fine-grained, and therefore much more fuzzy.

<sup>202</sup> [http://sf.glasnet.ru:8105/vk/book/boltik/boltik\\_03.htm](http://sf.glasnet.ru:8105/vk/book/boltik/boltik_03.htm)

<sup>203</sup> Maurice (1996: 124: 124) gives a sentence with a non-topical perfective infinitive, expressing a verb of motion, and a dative: (...) *mne tam proziti dva kvartala tam malen'kij pod'emchik* (...). I think this sentence must be seen as a regular case of the DI-construction. The perfective aspect here is triggered by the 'restrictive' context: 'I only have to pass two blocks, and there will be a little hill.'

## 4.16.2 The existential construction

In this subsection I will briefly discuss the meaning and syntactic structure of the so-called existential construction. I will discuss this construction because it shares both semantic and syntactic features with the DI-construction. Both the DI-construction and the existential construction express modal notions such as (im)possibility and (absence of) necessity, and in both constructions the dative participant can be seen as the potential agent of the infinitive situation. In the case of the existential construction, however, the dative participant can be seen as the potential agent of a situation, the realization of which depends on the availability of a place, time, or another entity that is closely associated with the action. As such, the dative participant is only *indirectly* the recipient of a situation.

Examples are given below of the existential construction:

- (387) **Est' mne kuda idti.** (Veyrenc, 1979: 72)  
is I-DAT where go-INF  
'There is somewhere for me to go.'
- (388) **Bylo s kem poznamomit'sja.** (Zolotova, 1982: 253)  
was-NEUT with someone meet-INF-PERF  
'There was someone to meet.'
- (389) **Emu nekuda bylo speshit'.** (Bricyn, 1990: 185)  
he-DAT nowhere was-NEUTER hurry-INF-PERF  
'There was nowhere for him to hurry to.'
- (390) **Emu ved' nechego bylo predlozhit' 'original'nogo'. A mne – est' chto.**<sup>204</sup> (S. Luk'janenko, *Zapax svobody*)  
he-DAT PRT nothing was-NEUT offer-INF-PERF “original”. but I-DAT – is what  
'After all, he had nothing interesting to suggest. But I have something to suggest.'
- (391) **Mne nechego bylo skizat' ej.**<sup>205</sup> (U. LeGuin, *Rybaki iz vnutrimor'ja*)  
I-DAT nothing was-IMPERS say-INF-PERF her  
'I had nothing to tell her.'
- (392) **Mne nechego stesnjat'sja.** (V. Erofeev, *Berdjaev*)

<sup>204</sup> [http:// www.moshkow.pp.ru:5000/ lat/ LUKXQN/ svoboda.txt](http://www.moshkow.pp.ru:5000/lat/ LUKXQN/ svoboda.txt)

<sup>205</sup> [http:// mirror.primorye.ru/ moshkow/ lat/ LEGUIN/ rybakizwnutrimoriya.txt](http://mirror.primorye.ru/moshkow/lat/ LEGUIN/ rybakizwnutrimoriya.txt)

me-DAT nothing be.ashamed.of-INF-IMPERF  
'There is nothing for me to be ashamed of.'

This construction is called 'existential' because it expresses that there *exists*, or in the case of negation does not exist, a place, time, person etc. that is connected to, or characterized by the realization of the infinitive situation (by the participant expressed in the dative if a dative, is expressed). The construction has a modal nature, comparable to the DI-construction, and can express notions close to absence of necessity, possibility and absence of possibility. The occurrence of these interpretations can be compared to the occurrence of these interpretations in the case of the DI-construction.<sup>206</sup>

In the case of 'absence of possibility' an intention/ tendency is ascribed to the dative participant to perform the infinitive situation Y, but instead the dative participant is the recipient of the situation 'not Y'; in such cases one can speak of *blocking* of an intended situation. In the case of 'possibility' an intention/ tendency is ascribed to the dative participant to perform Y, but this intention/ tendency is initially blocked; this blockage is removed such that the participant can perform the action. This *deblocking* is epistemic, that is, there is a *presupposition* that the agent will not perform the action because there is no place, time, etc. to do the action, but this presupposition is negated: the agent WILL be in the position to perform the action because there DOES exist such a place; such cases occur with an accented existential verb (*est*). As in the case with the DI-construction, it is typical of cases that express (im)possibility that an intention can be ascribed to the potential agent to perform the situation. Because of this, the interpretation of (\*im)possibility does not occur with inanimate participants to which no intention/ tendency can be ascribed to realize the situation, as in (393) below.

In the case of 'absence of necessity', the dative participant is indirectly the recipient of the infinitive situation assigned to him by some force (norm, script, etc.), while there is a presupposition that the dative participant disagrees with the realization of this situation.

In the rest of this section I will briefly discuss the semantic-syntactic structure of the construction. In the existential construction we find the following constituents:

- Dative: experiencer
- *byt'* neuter : existence of a situation
- Pronoun/ Adverb (K-word): person/ place/ time/ manner variable

---

<sup>206</sup> Růžichka (1994) argues that the modal content of the construction is carried by the infinitive; in my opinion this is an incorrect conclusion.

– Infinitive: situation type

The dative expresses the recipient (Bricyn, 1990: 188) of the availability of a person/ place, etc. variable, and indirectly the recipient of the infinitive situation. Apresjan & Iomdin (1989: 60) argue that the dative must be animate; they observe that the following sentence is ungrammatical:

- (393) \*Kartine negde povesit'  
 painting-DAT nowhere hang-INF-IMPERF  
 'There is nowhere for the picture to hang.'

They further observe that a non-animate dative is possible in the following construction *jabloku negde budet upast'* ('there is nowhere for the apple to fall'):

- (394) Kak bystro demograficheskoe davlenie zastavit nas zaselit' vsju Vselennuju tak, chto i **jabloku negde budet upast'**?<sup>207</sup> (R. Xajnajn, *Zvezdnaja pexota*)  
 how fast demographic pressure force us populate all universe such, that and apple-DAT nowhere will fall-INF-PERF  
 'How fast will the demographic pressure force us to populate the whole universe such that the apple has nowhere to fall?'

In my opinion, the observations made by Apresjan & Iomdin (1989: 60) should be specified. In cases where the construction expresses 'absence of possibility' or similar notions the existential construction can occur with non-animate participants:

- (395) Tut nichego ne proisxodit, potomu chto **proisxodit' nechemu**.<sup>208</sup> (A. Nikitin, *Oshibka*)  
 here nothing not happend, because happen-INF-IMPERF nothing-DAT  
 'Here nothing happens, because there is nothing to happen.'
- (396) Ruka ne bespokoit? – Normal'no, Mixail Antonovich. **Nechemu bespokoit'**.<sup>209</sup> (V. Xlumov, *Prelest'*)  
 hand not troubles? – normal, Mixail Antonovich. nothing-DAT trouble-INF-IMPERF  
 "Does the hand not make you worried?" "It looks normal, Mixail Antonovich. There is nothing to be worried about."

<sup>207</sup> <http://moshkow.relline.ru:5000/lat/HYNLINE/troopers.txt>

<sup>208</sup> <http://www.litera.ru:8085/slova/nikitin/err.html>

<sup>209</sup> <http://www.litera.ru:8085/slova/khlumov/prel2.htm>

- (397) Ubyl' vody proisxodit tol'ko za shchet intensivnogo isparenija letom (chasto nad morem stoit gustoj smog) – ved' vytekaj vode nekuda.<sup>210</sup>  
(...) PRT flow-INF-PERF water-DAT nowhere  
'The subsidence of the water only results from the intensive evaporation the during summer (often there is a thick smog above the water) – after all, there is nowhere for the water to flow to.'

The construction can only occur with non-animate participants if the dative participant is personified, as in (394), or more generally if a *tendency* can be ascribed to the dative participant to realize the infinitive situation. This reading is not possible in (393), since in this sentence the tendency to hang cannot be ascribed to the picture itself, but to the people that hang the picture.<sup>211</sup>

In the construction the dative participant is sometimes not expressed. In such cases the potential agent of the infinitive action is interpreted as a generic agent, or as the speaker of the sentence.

- (398) Est' kuda idti.  
is where go-INF  
'There is a place to go.'

In some cases the dative participant and the pronoun 'collapse'. These are negative sentences where the pronoun refers to the agent of the infinitive action:

- (399) Nekomu bylo rabotat'. (Bricyn, 1990: 183)  
no-one-DAT was-NEUTER work-INF  
'There was no-one to work.'
- (400) V Madride net oficerov. Nekomu komandovat'. (Bricyn, 1990: 193/ A. Afinogenov)  
in Madrid no officers. No-one-DAT command-INF  
'In Madrid there are no officers. There is no-one to give orders.'

In these sentences it is expressed that there are no agents that can realize situation type Y. In some cases the negative pronoun in the dative case does not express the potential agent, but the benefactive participant of the infinitive:

---

<sup>210</sup> <http://spbf.atlant.ru:8070/israel/deadsea.htm>

<sup>211</sup> This is comparable to the use of *succeed* in English.

- (401) No **nekomu mne** shljapoj **poklonit'sja**. (Bricyn, 1990: 188/ Esenin)  
 but no-one-DAT I-DAT with.hat bow-INF-PERF  
 'There is no-one to take my hat off for.'

The verb *byt'* ('be'), in the neuter declination, expresses the existence of the entity, which is expressed by the pronoun/ adverb and the infinitive. The following semantic-syntactic information is further relevant with respect to the verb *byt'* in the construction:

- In the present tense positive sentences *byt* is expressed (*est'*) if accented.
- In the case of negation no present tense (*est'*) is expressed.
- In the case of negation *bylol' budet* is not accented.
- The negation is not placed before the verb *bylol' budet*, but before the pronoun/ adverb.

The infinitive expresses a situation type, and the K-word (interrogative noun/ adverb) expresses an argument or specification of this situation type, viz. a person/ place/ time/ manner variable. Apresjan & Iomdin (1989) argue concerning the construction of the type *negde spat'* that the following syntactic slots play a part: (i) dative infinitival agent, (ii) negative existential verb *ne-*, (iii) relative interrogative pronoun, which is dependent on the verb *byt'*, (iv) the null form of *byt'*, and (v) the infinitive, which is the subject of the verb *byt'*. In my opinion this analysis has two weak points.

Firstly, Apresjan & Iomdin treat the *ne-* morph as an existential verb, whereas the idea of predicativity cannot be ascribed to a *form* in all cases, but must be seen as an interpretative phenomenon in sentences without *byt'*. In my analysis I would therefore like to make a distinction between the question of which constituent must be seen as the predicate, and which constituent accounts for the 'predicative' idea, that is, the idea of something 'being the case'.

Secondly, I think it is useful to distinguish two different types of informational relations for the infinitive and the K-word in this construction, viz. (i) the K-word *predicates* over the infinitive, and (ii) the infinitive is a *specification-restriction* to the K-word. I wish to argue that because of the valency relation between the infinitive and the K-word, these interpretations are logically equivalent, but differ in terms of the information structure of the sentence.

Consider the following configurations of *(ne)kuda bezhat'*:

*Meaning and interpretation of the DI-construction*

*Infinitival specification*

- (402) Kogda nekuda polzti, **est'**, **kuda bezhat'**.<sup>212</sup> (Ju. Shevchuk, "DDT")  
when nowhere crawl-INF, is, where run-INF-IMPERF  
'If there is nowhere to crawl to, there is somewhere to run to.'
- (403) Da, bezvyhodnoe polozenie. **Nekuda bezhat'**. Da i bezhat' – protivno.<sup>213</sup> (A. Legostaev, *Zamok Pjatnistvoj rozy*)  
(...) nowhere run-INF-IMPERF. (...)  
'Yes, it is a hopeless situation. There is nowhere to run to. And running away feels like a bad thing to do.'
- (404) Smotri, **mne nekuda bezhat'**.<sup>214</sup> (B. Grebenshchikov, *Mne nuzhny akkordy*)  
look-IMP, I-DAT nowhere run-INF-IMPERF  
'Look, there is nowhere for me to run.'
- (405) Fataru **bylo nekuda bezhat'**.<sup>215</sup> (A. Zorich, *Karl, gercog*)  
Fatar-DAT was-NEUT nowhere run-INF-IMPERF  
'There was nowhere for Fatar to run.'

*Infinitival topic*

- (406) Ved' s zemnogo shara-to **bezhat' nekuda**.<sup>216</sup>  
PRT from globe PRT run-INF-IMPERF nowhere  
'There is no running away from the globe.'
- (407) Ty v ljuboj moment mozshesh' bezhat'. – Net, Garriet. Skol'ko mozhno begat'. **Mne bezhat' nekuda**.<sup>217</sup> (K. Sajmak, *Chto mozhet byt' prosbche vremeni*)  
(...) I-DAT run-INF-IMPERF nowhere

---

<sup>212</sup> <http://www.arty.net.ru/lib/lat/KSP/shewchuk.txt>

<sup>213</sup> <http://www.magister.msk.ru:8085/library/sf/legoa004.htm>

<sup>214</sup> <http://www.moshkow.pp.ru:5000/lat/KSP/greben.txt>

<sup>215</sup> <http://moshkov.surgut.ru/library/lat/RUFANT/ZORICH/carl.txt>

<sup>216</sup> <http://www.forum.msk.ru:8084/guestbook-14oct.html>

<sup>217</sup> <http://lib.nordnet.ru/lat/SIMAK/dant2.txt>

“You can run away at any moment.” “No, Harriet. That’s not true. There is nowhere for me to run.””

- (408) No raznica dejstvitel’no est’ i ona zaključaetsja v tom, čto **tamoshnim koxam** iz Ameriki **bezhat’ bylo nekuda**.<sup>218</sup>  
 (...), that locals-DAT commies-DAT-PL from United States run-INF-IMPERF was-NEUT nowhere  
 ‘But there really is a difference, and that difference is that the local communists couldn’t run away from the United States.’
- (409) Ten’ roka uzhe kosnulas’ ee, i **bezhat’ bylo nekuda**, i srazhat’sja bessmyslenno.<sup>219</sup> (D. Gromov, *Put’ prokljatyx*)  
 (...) run-INF-IMPERF was-NEUT nowhere, (...)  
 ‘The shadow of fate had already touched her, and there was nowhere to run, and fighting was pointless.’

I would like to analyze these expressions as follows.

In (402) the verb *byt’* is expressed in the present tense to express the idea of existence, namely the existence of the phenomenon expressed by the K-word. The infinitive can be seen as the *specification* of the K-word. In this expression, the infinitive can be seen as a semantic restriction to the information expressed by the K-word. The K-word expresses ‘direction’, and presupposes the idea of a situation for which the direction is indicated. The infinitive expresses the situation type that is connected to the direction expressed by the K-word. In affirmative sentences the verb *est’* is accented, which means that the presupposition of the absence of the phenomenon expressed by the K-word is contradicted/ negated. In such sentences the verb *est’* must be seen as the predicative center of the construction.

In negative sentences like (403)–(404) the predicative center is not expressed, but implied by the context. In my opinion it is best to say that in (403)–(404) the *whole constituent* has a predicative interpretation, that is, [*né*+ K-word – infinitive] is interpreted as the *absence* (= non-existence) of place/ person, etc. specified in terms of the realization of the infinitive situation.

In (405) we find the same structure with the expression of *bylo*. In this expression the constituent [*né*+ K-word – infinitive] must be seen as the subject of *bylo*. In this

<sup>218</sup> <http://www.forum.msk.ru:8084/guestbook-po10nov.html>

<sup>219</sup> <http://lib.nordnet.ru/lat/OLDI/nekrorom.txt>

construction it is expressed that the dative participant was the recipient of the scene expressed by [*né*+K-word – infinitive].

In (406)–(407) the infinitive functions as a topic. In this expression the coordination of the infinitive + *né*+K-word is interpreted such that the information expressed by [*né*+K-word] is related to the information already expressed by the infinitive. In this sentence the K-word can be seen as the *predicate* of the sentence. This is comparable to expressions where the infinitive is the topic, and where the adverb is a predicate.

In (408)–(409) we find the same construction with the form *bylo*. In these expressions the infinitive functions as a topic. This means that the information expressed by [*bylo* – *né*+K-word] must be seen as the predicate of the infinitive. The infinitive can be seen as the subject of *bylo*, which accounts for the *-o* morphology here.

A different information structure can be found below:

- (410) Nexudo napomnit', chto evrejam nekuda bylo bezhat' ot Gitlera, britancy dazhe ne puskali ix v Palestinu.<sup>220</sup>  
(..) that jews-DAT nowhere was-NEUT run-INF from Hitler, (...)  
'It is not bad to remember, that the Jews had nowhere to run from Hitler, the British didn't even let them into Palestine.'

It might be argued that we have the following structure here: [dative [*nekuda*<sub>predicate</sub> *bylo*<sub>auxiliary</sub>] [*bezhat'*]<sub>specification</sub>]]. The form *bylo* constitutes a unit with the predicate *nekuda*; the infinitive is expressed to specify the situation connected to the direction expressed by the predicate. A reason not to treat *bylo* + infinitive as one unit with the character of a semantic addition to the K-word predicate is that I have not attested cases with the structure [dative *bylo* infinitive *né*+K-word] or with the structure [dative *né*+K-word infinitive *bylo*]. On the other hand, it could be argued, sentences like these occupy an intermediate position between cases with infinitive subjects/topics, and infinitive specifications. In this case I think it is not possible to answer the question of whether the *-o* morphology of *bylo* must be attributed to the infinitive or to the K-word + infinitive; in this construction both readings are at stake.

The specific meaning of the construction can also motivate the placement of the negation in the construction. The negation of the existential construction is analyzed by Růžhichka (1994: 67). He motivates the position of the negation by pointing at the fact that the negation is placed before the element whose existence is negated: extensionally

---

<sup>220</sup> <http://www.forum.msk.ru:8084/files/990602181824.gb.html>

speaking, the negation of the copula amounts to the negation of the universal adverb. In my opinion, the motivation given by Růzhichka (1994: 67) is correct, although it does not take account of important criteria, viz. the specific information structure of the existential construction.

In sentences without negation, the verb *byt'* is expressed in those cases where there is a presupposition that there is no place, time, etc. for the infinitive situation, and where the presupposition is contradicted: there IS a place, time, etc. for the infinitive situation. In the case of negative sentences, the verb *byt'* does not have the same existential character. In these sentences the non-existence of some entity is not emphasized by contradicting the presupposition that such an entity does exist. The idea of emphasizing the existence of an entity probably cannot be semantically combined with the idea of the absence of an entity.<sup>221</sup>

#### 4.16.3 Infinitives + dative as complements to nouns or predicates

In this subsection I will briefly discuss the occurrence of datives in constructions with infinitives that function as specifications to nouns or participles. The following sentences are examples of this construction:

*Forms of causation + vsem*

- (411) Selixov segodnja s utra dal komandu vsem otdyxat', kupat'sja. (Bricyn, 1990: 155/ A. Salynskij)  
 Selixov today this morning gave order everyone-DAT rest-INF-IMPERF, swim-INF-IMPERF  
 'Selixov gave an order this morning that everyone should rest and swim.'

---

<sup>221</sup> I suspect that the placement of the negation is further influenced by the expression of a dative subject. As in the case of the DI-construction, the expression of the dative presupposes an initial information state where the dative participant is not the recipient of the infinitive situation, which is contradicted. In sentence (..) the presupposition that there is *some* place to go is negated; it is expressed that there is *no* place to go. If the negation would occur before the verb *byt'*, e.g. *Emu kuda ne bylo speshit'* ('There was nowhere for him to go.'), it would be expressed that some place exists, and that you cannot go there. I think that this clashes with the modal interpretation of the infinitive in this case. In this construction we start out from the presupposition that there is some place to go. This means that the existence of this place is established, and that the verb *byt'*, which expresses existence, cannot be negated, but only the entity which was presupposed to be there.

*Meaning and interpretation of the DI-construction*

- (412) Kto-to **predpolozhil** vyvalit' iz odnoj mashiny seno i **vsem zakopat'sja** v nem. (Proeme, *forthcoming*/ Ajmatov)  
someone proposed throw.out from one.of cars straw and all-DAT dig-INF-PERF in her  
'Someone proposed to throw out all the straw from the car, and that everyone would dig into it.'
- (413) Kazhdyj god u nas takie pobegi. U inzhenerov mashinka sbezhala. I teper' **prikaz vsem lovit'**. (A. & B. Strugackie, *Ulitka na sklone*)  
every year at us such run aways. with engineers' machine ran away. And now order everyone-DAT catch-INF-IMPERF  
'Every year we had such runaways. The engineers machine ran off. And now an order to everyone to catch it./ And now an order that everyone must catch it'
- (414) **Resheno bylo vsem ostavat'sja nochevat'**. (Proeme, *forthcoming*/ Bulgakov)  
Decided was all-DAT stay-INF-IMPERF sleep-INF-IMPERF  
'It was decided that everyone would stay the night./ 'It was decided for everyone to stay the night.'
- (415) Novyj pravitel' sozval družej, i **bylo resheno vsem vmeste otpravit'sya** k dobroj volshebнице Stelle v nadezhde, chto ona pomozhet.<sup>222</sup> (A.Volkov, *Sem' podzemnyx korolej*)  
(...), and was-NEUT decided all-DAT together go-INF-PERF to good witch Stella  
'The new head called his friends, and it was decided that everyone would go together to the good witch Stella in the hope that she would help.'

*Nouns of 'thought' + dative*

- (416) Nu? Jasno? **Kakoj smysl vam molchat'**? Budem govorit'? (Proeme, *forthcoming*, Semënov)  
well? clear? which meaning you-DAT keep silent-INF-IMPERF? We will talk  
'Well? Is it clear? What reason is there for you not to talk? Shall we talk?'
- (417) Razumeetsja, Simpkins! No **kakoj smysl vam exat'**? Ved' Slejton ubit.<sup>223</sup> (A. Beljaev, *Ostrov pogibshix korablej*)  
of.course, Simpkins! but what meaning you-DAT go-INF? PRT Slejton murdered  
'Of course, Simpkins! But why should you go? Slejton has been murdered ...'

<sup>222</sup> <http://www.atlant.ru:8070/library/volkov/7kings/index.htm>

<sup>223</sup> <http://www.magister.msk.ru:8085/library/sf/belya003.htm>

- (418) Vy sprashivaete, oldfellow, est' li **smysl vam** i dal'she **ostavat'sja** v vashem priključenii? – govoril on.<sup>224</sup> (V. Aksenov, *Kruglye sutki non-stop*)  
 you ask, oldfellow, is PRT reason you-DAT and further stay-INF-PERF in your adventures? – said he  
 “‘You ask, old fellow, if there is a reason for you to go on with your adventure?’”, he said.’

Bricyn (1990: 153–157) discusses the use of the infinitive as a specification to a noun, without explicitly mentioning the possibility of expressing a dative (in one of his examples (1990: 155), however, a dative is given). He distinguishes two types, viz. cases that occur with nouns that express ‘causation’ (*komanda, prikaz, nakaž, zavet, zadacha, lozung, prizyv*), and those that occur with nouns that express ‘thoughts’ (*mysl', mnenie, duma*). In most of the examples that he gives no dative is expressed; in such sentences the identity of the non-expressed infinitive subject remains unspecified or can be inferred from the context.

It could be argued that the occurrence of the dative subject here points at the ‘subordinate’ character of such infinitives, that is, these cases can be seen as uses of the DI-construction in a subordinate context. The opinion that infinitives occurring with nouns can be seen as infinitive sentences is rejected by Bricyn (1990: 156), who argues that the meaning of the infinitive component in these cases does not depend solely on the semantics of the individual forms, but principally depends on the semantics of the noun to which it belongs. According to Bricyn, the meaning of the infinitive-component can therefore not be seen as identical to the meaning of the infinitive sentence.

I agree with Bricyn’s observation that the infinitive cannot be seen as *identical to the meaning of the infinitive sentence*, but I would like to make some further remarks. The main question pertaining to the sentences given above is whether the dative must be seen as the indirect object/ benefactive object of the noun/ participle, or whether it must be seen as the potential subject of the infinitive. It seems to me that in the case of the sentences with *smysl* (‘reason’), just one reading is possible, namely a reading where the dative is analyzed as the benefactive object of the noun. Sentence (416) means ‘what sense does it make for you to realize the infinitive situation’, and not ‘what is the meaning of you realizing the infinitive situation.’ Further evidence for the benefactive

---

<sup>224</sup> <http://www.moshkow.pp.ru:5000/lat/AKSENOW/nonstop.txt>

status of the dative can be found from similar expressions that have a different information structure. Consider the following sentences with the noun *smysl*:

- (419) I esli dvuxgolovyj pirat ne vral (a kakoj **emu smysl vrat'**, esli podumat'), polozhenie sil'no oslozhnilos'.<sup>225</sup> (A.& B. Strugackie, *Èkspedicija v preispodniju*)  
and if twoheaded pirate not lied (but which he-DAT reason lie-INF-IMPERF, of think), situation strongly became.complicated  
'And if the two-headed pirate didn't lie (and why should he, if you think about it), then the situation has become radically worse.'
- (420) Kakoj **smysl emu** voobshche ix **puskat'**?<sup>226</sup> (V.Vasil'ev, *Smert' ili slava*)  
which reason he-DAT in.general them let.go-INF-IMPERF?  
'What reason is there for him to let them go at all?'

In (419) and (420) the dative does not co-occur with the infinitive, which means that it must be seen as a benefactive object of the noun.

A different situation is at stake in the case of the forms of causation. In analyzing this construction a distinction has to be made between the semantic-logical structure of the sentence, and the semantic-syntactic structure of the sentence. In terms of the *semantic-logical structure*, in the case of 'forms of causation' the identity of the indirect/benefactive object is identical to the non-expressed participant of the infinitive. This is comparable to the structure of objective infinitives, where the indirect object of the finite verb is identical to the non-expressed infinitive agent (see 4.4.4.1).<sup>227</sup> In terms of the *semantic-syntactic structure*, however, the dative may form a constituent with the infinitive, or with the noun. Regarding this last question, the following criteria have to be taken into account, viz. (i) what is the prosodic structure of the construction, (ii) what is the valency structure, or array of combinatory possibilities of the noun/participle, and (iii) what is the information structure of the construction. I will briefly discuss the criteria below.

Firstly, the question of to which constituent the dative belongs may be evidenced by the prosodic structure of the expression. Consider the following sentence (without a dative):

---

<sup>225</sup> [http://moshkow.relline.ru:5000/lat/STRUGACKIE/hell\\_exp.txt](http://moshkow.relline.ru:5000/lat/STRUGACKIE/hell_exp.txt)

<sup>226</sup> [http://moshkow.relline.ru:5000/lat/WASILXEW/d\\_glory.txt](http://moshkow.relline.ru:5000/lat/WASILXEW/d_glory.txt)

<sup>227</sup> Note that objective infinitives also occur with accusative objects (e.g. *sprositi*).

- (421) Byl prikaz – plennyx ne trogat’! (Paustovskij, 1985: 27)  
 was order – captives not touch-INF-IMPERF  
 ‘There was an order – “don’t touch the captives!”’

In this sentence we find the predicate *prikaz* and an infinitive complement. This complement has a clause character, which is evidenced by the existence of an intonation break between the two parts of the sentence, and by the specific intonation associated with an order, symbolized by the exclamation mark. This can be compared to the following sentence with an imperative:

- (422) Rotnyj peredal komandu “stoj”.<sup>228</sup> (P. Andreev, *Dvenadcat’ rasskazov*)  
 commander gave order “stand.still-IMP”  
 ‘The commander gave the order: “Stand still”.’

The independent character of the infinitive clause is therefore dependent on the intonational pattern at stake. In the sentences with nouns derived from verbs of causation given above, an intonation break may be inserted in the following way:

- (423) Selixov segodnja s utra dal komandu // vsem otdyxat’, kupat’sja.  
 (424) Resheno bylo // vsem ostavat’sja nochevat’.  
 (425) Novyj pravitel’ sozval družej, i bylo resheno // vsem vmeste otpravit’sya k dobroj volshebнице Stelle v nadezhde, chto ona pomozhet.  
 (426) Kazhdy god u nas takie pobegi. U inzhenerov mashinka sbezhala. I teper’ prikaz vsem // lovit’.

According to this principle, (423)–(425) can be seen as infinitive sentences, and as instances of the DI-construction. Note that according to this principle the following sentence, where *vsem* modifies a noun, *cannot* be seen as an infinitive sentence:

- (427) No dazhe esli i tak – (...), peredadut komandu vsem okrestnym rajotdelam i sluzhbam gosbezopasnosti iskat’ chernuyu ‘emku’ s takim-to nomerom.<sup>229</sup> (V. Zvjagincev, *Boj mestnogo znachenija*)

<sup>228</sup> <http://www.moshkow.pp.ru:5000/lat/MEMUARY/AFGAN/andreev.txt>

<sup>229</sup> <http://www.moshkow.pp.ru:5000/lat/ZWQGINCEW/boi.txt>

*Meaning and interpretation of the DI-construction*

(...) give order all-DAT neighboring-DAT regional.department-DAT and services-DAT of.state security look.for-INF-PERF black “emka” with that number  
‘But even if that is the case, they will give an order to all the neighboring regional departments and services of state security to look for the black “emka” [car] with a given license plate.’

Here the intonation break must be placed before the infinitive:

- (428) No dazhe esli i tak – (...), **peredadut komandu vsem okrestnym rajotdelam i sluzhbam gosbezopasnosti // iskat’** chernuju ‘emku’ s takim-to nomerom.
- (429) ?No dazhe esli i tak – (...), **peredadut komandu // vsem okrestnym rajotdelam i sluzhbam gosbezopasnosti iskat’** chernuju ‘emku’ s takim-to nomerom.

The second reading is pragmatically strange because it means that an order was given, and that the content of the order was: “*Vsem okrestnym rajotdelam i sluzhbam gosbezopasnosti iskat’ chernuju “emku” s takim-to nomerom!*”

Secondly, in order to answer the question of to which constituent the dative belongs, it is important to look at the ‘valency structure’ of the noun or participle in question. Nouns like *prikaz*, and *komanda* can occur with ‘indirect objects’ expressed in the dative (*prikaz’ komandu komu*), e.g.:

- (430) Kto dal emu komandu dostavit’ zaderzhannogo imenno v Suxanovskuju (...)??<sup>230</sup> (V. Zvjagincev, *Boj mestnogo znachenija*)  
who gave him-DAT order deliver-INF-PERF prisoner exactly to Suxanoskaja  
‘Who gave him an order to bring the prisoner to Suxanoskaja?’

This analysis cannot account for sentences with *resheno* since this participle does not have a dative listed in its valency structure, or put differently, this participle does not occur with datives; the following sentence is ungrammatical:

- (431) ?Bylo resheno nam chto, ...  
was-NEUT decided we-DAT that ...

---

<sup>230</sup><http://www.moshkow.pp.ru:5000/lat/ZWQGINCEW/boi.txt>

This suggests that with *resheno*, the form *vsem* forms a constituent with the infinitive, and not with the participle. The restriction of the dative to *vse* can be motivated as follows. The impossibility of (431) must be accounted for by the *semantic function* of *vse*. In most cases of the construction under discussion [noun/ participle of causation + infinitive] no dative is expressed because the identity of the participant for whom the decision is taken ('indirect object'), which is extensionally identical to the non-expressed infinitive subject, can be inferred from the context, e.g.:

- (432) Uzhe **resheno bylo otpravit'sja** cherez ves' arxipelag Soroka Ostrovov, verbuja na puti storonnikov Konfederacii.<sup>231</sup> (S. Luk'janenko, *Rycari soroka ostrovov*)  
 already decided-PART was-NEUT go-INF through whole archipelago of.fourty islands, (...)  
 'It was already decided to go through the whole archipelago of the Fourty Islands, recruiting supporters of the Confederacy on the way.'
- (433) Èj, Ivanov! Ja dal **komandu snjat'** protivogazy, a ty chto – osobennyj? – Da ja ego davno snjal! – Nu i morda zhe u tebjja!<sup>232</sup>  
 (...) I gave order take.off gas masks, but you what – special? (...)  
 "Hey, Ivanov! I gave an order to take off the gas masks, but what do you do, are you special or what?" "I took it off long ago." "What a face you have!"

However, if the speaker wants to emphasise that *all* potential agents must be associated with the 'indirect object'/ non-expressed infinitive subject, it is necessary to express this formally, since it cannot be inferred from the context. For such cases it is natural to choose the dative form. The dative is in accordance with the meaning of *resheno*: this participle expresses an act that is directed at a participant, such that this participant is affected ('it was decided for everyone').

Thirdly, the information structure of the construction may give an indication as to which constituent the dative belongs. In all cases the form *vsem* occurs before the infinitive – I have not attested cases with the dative before the noun/ participle – and in all cases the dative seems to form a syntactic-semantic unit with the infinitive.

Considering what I have said above, I conclude that the construction [*vsem* + infinitive] may occur as a clause with a subordinate character in the case of expressions of causation such as *dat' komandu* or *bylo resheno*. In the case of *dat' komandu* the infinitive clause functions as the specification of the object of the verb; it expresses the content

<sup>231</sup> [http://www.moshkow.pp.ru:5000/lat/LUKXQN/Forty\\_Isles.txt](http://www.moshkow.pp.ru:5000/lat/LUKXQN/Forty_Isles.txt)

<sup>232</sup> <http://www.atlant.ru:8070/library/anecdots/423.HTM>

of the order. In the case of *bylo resheno* the infinitive functions as the subject of the verb *byt'*; it expresses the content of the decision. The occurrence of the dative of *use* in these cases is influenced by the noun/ participle with which the infinitive clause occurs, but also forms an independent semantic-syntactic unit with the infinitive. In my opinion, the occurrence of the dative in these cases is facilitated by the co-reference of the indirect/ benefactive object of the form of causation and the infinitive subject. This can be motivated by the fact that no cases with *nikomu* are attested. Respondents pointed out that such sentences can only occur with a clear intonational pause:

- (434) Selixov segodnja s utra dal komandu: "Nikomu ne otdyxat', kupat'sja".  
Selixov this.morning gave order: "no-one-DAT not rest-INF-IMPERF, swim-INF-IMPERF  
This morning Selixov gave the order: "No-one is allowed to rest or swim.'

The intonation break is probably necessary because the dative cannot be interpreted as the indirect object of *dat' komandu*. This case suggests that the expression of *usem* is facilitated by the co-reference of the indirect object with the infinitive subject.

In the following section I will discuss the use of the so-called second dative. Although this construction can also be seen as a construction related to the DI-construction, I will devote a separate section to it.

#### **4.17 The second dative**

##### **4.17.1 Introduction**

In this section I will discuss the assignment of the dative case to the Russian forms *odin* ('alone') and *sam* ('self') when they occur as modifiers or adjuncts (Neidle, 1982, 1988) of the non-expressed subject of the infinitive or as modifiers of the expressed dative subject: the so-called 'second dative' (Chagisheva, 1971; Comrie 1974) or 'semipredicative' (Franks, 1990) in the dative case. The forms *odin* and *sam* are usually called 'second predicates' in the literature (Comrie, 1974; Neidle 1982, 1988). The term 'second predicate' or 'semipredicative' is used to refer to modifiers that are detached from the noun phrase to which they – according to some models – refer (e.g Comrie, 1974; Neidle, 1982, 1988; Franks, 1999). Before discussing the meaning and use of the semipredicatives *odin* and *sam*, I will briefly consider the use of semipredicatives/ second predicates with adjectives.

In Russian adjectives can occur as second predicates or semipredicates in the instrumental case, or in the nominative case (Comrie, 1974). Consider the following sentences:

*Instrumental case*

- (435) Esli b ty ne vstretilas' / Ja b tebja pridumal / Chtob v aprele mesjace / Ne xodit' ugrjumym.<sup>233</sup>  
if IRR you not met / I IRR you made.up/ in.order in April month/ not go-INF-IMPERF gloomy-INSTR  
'If you had not met me / I would have made you up/ So I wouldn't have to go around gloomy in the month of April.'
- (436) Ivan vernulsja ugrjumym. (Comrie, 1974)  
Ivan-NOM returned gloomy-INSTR  
'Ivan returned gloomy.'

*Nominative case (case agreement with nominative antecedent)*

- (437) Chto stoish' ugrjumyj.<sup>234</sup>  
what you.stand gloomy-NOM  
'Why are you looking so gloomy?'
- (438) Na rynok on vernulsja ugryumyj. Oshchushchenie viny tjazhest'ju leglo na ego serdce.<sup>235</sup> (N. Samuxina, *Fontan Albeni*)  
on market he-NOM returned gloomy-NOM. feeling of.guilt as.a.weight lay on his heart  
'He returned gloomy to the market. The feeling of guilt felt like a weight on his heart.'

Comrie (1974) and other scholars (e.g. Neidle, 1988) argue that the choice of either the instrumental or nominative is a matter of convention, and that the instrumental is preferred in modern Russian.<sup>236</sup> It may indeed be the case that conventionalization is at stake here, but I think that the different cases are also related to a difference in conceptualization. According to the literature on case (Jakobson, 1995), the

<sup>233</sup> <http://math.ucsd.edu/~broido/lyr/T8/T8.146.lat.html#s.8>

<sup>234</sup> <http://math.ucsd.edu/~broido/xref/ug/ugryumyj.lat.html>

<sup>235</sup> <http://lib.nordnet.ru/lat/ZHURNAL/samuhina.txt>

<sup>236</sup> Following Comrie (1974), I conclude that in the case of dative subjects, the case of the adjunct is instrumental, and not dative.

instrumental case is used if the property expressed by the adjective is conceptualized as a property of the situation expressed by the verb, whereas in those sentences where the case of the adjective agrees with its antecedent, the property expressed by the adjective is seen as a property of the antecedent.<sup>237</sup> In some instances, however, it is difficult to distinguish between these different readings; consider the following sentence:

- (439) On ushel surovyj i ugrjumyj / Golovoj na grud' svoju ponik.<sup>238</sup>  
he-NOM went.away grim-NOM and gloomy-NOM / head on chest his hanged  
'He went away grim and gloomy/ His head hanged on his chest.'

In this sentence the nominative occurs, whereas the action itself is described as being 'gloomy'. Note furthermore that with some verbs no choice is possible between the instrumental case and another case; in such cases the instrumental case is listed in the valency structure of the verb. This is the case for example with the verb *vygljadet'* ('look like'):

- (440) A ostrov vygljadit ugrjumym i sedym.<sup>239</sup>  
but island looks gloomy-INSTR and grey-INSTR  
'But the island looks gloomy and grey.'

---

<sup>237</sup> Chagisheva (1971) shows in her article that there have been diachronic changes in the assignment of case to second predicates. In the eleventh century (until the sixteenth century) the second dative could be used with different predicates in modal infinitival structures [first dative + verb *byt'* + second dative], in impersonal structures, or in structures with a modal predicate [first dative + modal (directive) verb + verb *byt'* + second dative]. In this period the dative was used in contexts where in modern Russian the instrumental case is used (*emu byt' z'biivu* instead of *emu byt' z'biivym*). In the same period, however, a tendency can be perceived to assign the instrumental case to second predicates. This tendency occurs first in the speech of written narratives, and is restricted to specific syntactic contexts. Chagisheva argues that the use of the instrumental case for second datives means that the subordinate relation between the second predicate and the first dative is weakened, and that the subordinate relation with the verb is strengthened. Chagisheva (1971: 231) explains the changes of case assignment in terms of the division of labor between the dative and the instrumental case. In Old Russian the dative is polyfunctional, but this polyfunctional status has changed because the instrumental case has taken over one function of the dative, viz. the expression of the relation with the predicate (instead of the relation between the second predicate and the first dative). In modern Russian the situation of Old Russian, where the dative is assigned to second predicates only, occurs with the forms *odin* and *sam*, and optionally with the adjective *pervyj* ('first').

<sup>238</sup> <http://math.ucsd.edu/~broido/xref/ug/ugryumyj.lat.html>

<sup>239</sup> <http://euclid.ucsd.edu/~broido/xref/ug/ugryumym.lat.html>

In the literature, the term ‘second dative’ is employed to refer to the use of the words *sam* and *odin* in the dative case when they function as second predicates. The case assignment of these forms differs from other adjectives such as *ugrjumyj*. The semipredicatives can agree in case with their antecedent, also if the antecedent is a dative subject:<sup>240</sup>

- (441) Oleg, tebe nel'zja tuda idti odnomu  
 Oleg, you-DAT may not there go-INF-IMPERF alone-DAT  
 ‘Oleg, you may not go there alone.’

However, the second dative (*sam*, *odin* in the dative case) also occurs in contexts where there is no such agreement at all. Consider the following sentence:

- (442) Samoe vazhnoe- umenie rabotat' odnomu. (Neidle, 1982: 416)  
 most important – ability work-Inf alone-DAT  
 ‘The most important thing is the ability to work alone.’

In this sentence there is no antecedent available for the second predicate; nevertheless we find a second dative. What is the motivation for the occurrence of the second dative? Before this question can be answered, it is necessary to look at the different contexts for second datives:

- (i) In sentences with an adverbial predicate, with or without dative subject
- (ii) With objective infinitives and some subjective infinitives
- (iii) With passives
- (iv) With infinitive predicates with a dative subject (DI-construction proper)
- (v) With infinitive predicates with overt subordinators

---

<sup>240</sup> Another exception is the adjective *pervyj* (‘first’), that can also show agreement with the dative subject, e.g.: [*V*]am streljat' pervomu. (Timofeev, 1950: 268/ Lermontov); you-DAT shoot-INF-IMPERF first-ADJ-DAT; ‘You may shoot first.’ Another example from this century: *Delo jasnoe, v poselke-to vse kommunisty, nikomu pervomu k stene idti ne xochetsja (...)*. (V. Xolmogorov, *Podboroka rasskazov*); (...) no-one-DAT first-DAT to wall go-INF not want-REFL; ‘It’s all very clear, in the settlement everyone is a communist, and no-one likes to stand against the wall to be shot.’ Chagisheva (1971: 213) further remarks that (primarily) in the spoken language the second dative also occurs with other adjectives; she gives the following example: *Zhivomu, synok [tebe] byt' (...)*; alive-DAT son [you-DAT] be-INF; ‘You will be alive my son.’ Another example, from a translation of Astrid Lingren is given here: *V zdumaesb' nas opjat' vodit' za nos – zhivomu tebe ne byt', tak i znaj*; <http://www.moshkow.pp.ru:5000/lat/LINDGREN/blumkvis.txt>; (...) alive-DAT you not be-INF (...); ‘If you take it into your head to deceive us, you won’t stay alive, don’t forget it.’ The construction with *zhivomu* probably shows idiomatic features.

*Meaning and interpretation of the DI-construction*

- (vi) In sentences where the infinitive is a complement to a noun or an impersonally used reflexive finite verb
- (vii) In infinitival complement sentences without dative subjects

I will briefly present these contexts.

*(i) Adverbial predicates*

The second dative occurs in sentences with an adverbial predicate and a dative subject:

- (443) Mne trudno **rabotat'** **odnomu**.  
I-DAT difficult-ADV work-INF alone-DAT  
'I find it difficult to work alone.'

In such sentences the second dative and the dative subject are co-referential. The second dative also occurs in sentences with an adverbial predicate, without dative subject, where the second dative is co-referential with the non-specified, generic agent

- (444) No vse èto, konechno, nado **videt'** **samomu**.<sup>241</sup> (V. Pelevin, *Zhizn' nasekomyx*)  
but all that, of.course, need-ADV see-INF-IMPERF self-DAT  
'But all that you have to see yourselves of course.')
- (445) Estestvenno, možno **samomu nakruchivat'** schetchik, no za ètim bditel'no sledjat i strogo nakazyvajut.<sup>242</sup> (Text about an internet site where you can make money by clicking on an icon)  
of.course, may-ADV self-DAT screw-INF-IMPERF counter, but after that careful follow and severe punish  
'Of course you can screw with the counter yourselves, but people follow this carefully and punish offenders severely.'

In (444) a dative noun can be inserted within the paradigm to express the identity of the non-expressed infinitive agent, but in (445) the expression of a dative noun changes the meaning of the sentence: [dative + *možhno*] is interpreted as a case of permission, whereas *možhno* is interpreted as a case of possibility (see 4.10.2.6 for a discussion).

---

<sup>241</sup> [http:// mirror.primorye.ru/ moshkow/ lat/ PELEWIN/ insectos.txt](http://mirror.primorye.ru/moshkow/lat/PELEWIN/insectos.txt)

<sup>242</sup> [http:// binocle.atlant.ru:8070/ archiv/ 9808.htm](http://binocle.atlant.ru:8070/archiv/9808.htm)

(ii) *Objective infinitives*

The second dative occurs in the case of so-called ‘objective infinitives’ (see also 4.4.3). In the case of objective infinitives the subject of the infinitive is co-referential with the object of the matrix sentence:

- (446) Ja velel emu **prijti odnomu**. (Neidle, 1988: 125)  
 I ordered he-DAT come-INF alone-DAT  
 ‘I ordered him to come alone.’

In many cases there is agreement between the dative case of the indirect object of the finite verb, and the dative case of the second dative. Neidle (1982: 394) argues that this is not a necessary feature; she gives the following example with the objective infinitive *poprositi* ‘(to ask)’, which has an accusative object listed in the valency structure, and occurs with a dative semipredicative:

- (447) My poprosili Ivana **pojti odnomu**/ \*odnogo. (Neidle, 1988: 126)  
 we asked Ivan-ACC to.come alone-DAT/ \*alone-ACC  
 ‘We asked Ivan to come alone.’

Below, two other examples are given:

- (448) [U]moljala ego otkazat’sja ot ee ruki i **samomu zashchitit’** ee ot vlasti roditelja. (Pushkin, *Dubrovskij*)  
 begged he-ACC refuse-INF-PERF from her hands and self-DAT defend her from power of.parent  
 ‘She begged him to refuse her hand, and to protect her from the power of her parents himself.’
- (449) Vas kak učenogo ne tjanet **samomu zanjat’sja** inoplanetnymi chudesami? (A. & B. Strugackie, *Piknik na obočine*)  
 you-AC as scientist not attracts self-DAT deal.with-INF-PERF out-of-space wonders?  
 ‘Does it not attract you as a scientist to work with wonders from another planet?’

In the case of so-called subjective infinitives, where the nominative subject and the non-expressed infinitive subject are co-referential, the second predicate normally occurs in the

nominative. I have attested subjective infinitives with a nominative semipredicative with the following verbs (see Bricyn, 1990, for a classification of verb types):<sup>243</sup>

- verbs that indicate the beginning of an action: e.g. *nachinat'*
- verbs that indicate the continuation of an action: e.g. *prodolzhat'*
- so-called 'definite verbs' (see Bricyn, 1990: 43): e.g. *izvolit'*
- the verbs *moch'* and *umet'*
- verbs that indicate actions that are directed at the realization of other actions by removing potential obstacles; the so-called 'probacionnye glagoly' (Bricyn, 1990: 52): e.g. *pytat'sja*
- verbs that indicate a psychological state: e.g. *oxotet, pozhelat', osmelit', sobirat'sja, prinjat'sja, reshit', dumat'*
- verbs that indicate psychological relations: e.g. *ljubit'*
- verbs that indicate goal-orientation: e.g. *pojiti*
- verbs with the meaning feature of 'to speak': e.g. *obeshchat'*
- with *stat'*, future tense of *byt'* (*budet*), and short predicates with *byt'* (*byt' dolzhen, byt' sposoben, byt' gotov, byt' nameren* etc. )
- with the expression *v silax* ('have strenght')

However, with some verbs in some specific contexts I have attested subjective infinitives with *dative* semipredicates. Consider the sentences below:

*reshit'* with *sam* in the dative

- (450) [Ja] reshil na sledujushchee utro, esli k èтому vremeni ne vernetsja Dik, **samomu otpravit'sja** v gorod i uznat', ne sluchilos' li s nim chego-nibud'.<sup>244</sup> (Ch. Bich, *Propavshaja sestra*)  
I-NOM decided on following morning, if till that time not will.return Dik, self-DAT go-INF-PERF in town and find.out-INF-PERF, not happened PRT with him something  
'I decided that the following morning, if Dik had not returned by that time, I would go into the city myself to find out if something had happened to him.'

---

<sup>243</sup> I suspect that the nominative case occurs with all subjective infinitives (see Bricyn, 1990 for a more complete list of verb classes).

<sup>244</sup> <http://moshkov.relline.ru:5000/lat/MAJNRID/vanished.txt>

*reshit'* with *sam* in the nominative

- (451) On reshil **sam sozdat'** vozduxoplavatel'nyj apparat i **sam poletet'** na nem. (F. Iskander, Stojanka cheloveka)  
 he-NOM decided self-NOM create-INF-PERF aeronautic machine and self-NOM fly-INF-PERF on her  
 'He decided to make an aeronautic machine himself, and to fly it himself.'

*norovit'* with *sam* in the dative

- (452) Voobshche, zhenivshis', on uzhasno razlenilsja i vse norovil ne **zapisyvat' samomu**, a – diktovat'. (N. Mandel'shtam, *Vospominanija*)  
 in.general, after.getting.married, he terribly grew.very.lazy and all aimed.at not write.down-INF-IMPERF self-DAT, but dictate-INF-IMPERF  
 'In general, he became very lazy after getting married, and just aimed at not writing anything down himself, but dictating it.'

*norovit'* with *sam* in the nominative

- (453) No kak tol'ko v ruki popadaet telekamera, vsjak norovit **sam vtisnut'sja** v pole s'emki.<sup>245</sup> (J. Nikitin, *Jarost'*)  
 but how only in hands fall camera, each-NOM aims.at self-NOM force.into-INF-IMPERF in field.of.filming  
 'But as soon as a camera falls into your hands, everyone wants to force himself into the field of filming.'

*stat'* with *sam* in the dative

- (454) Ja tipografii ne arestovyvaju potomu, milostivyj gosudar' Evstratij Pavlovich, chto u nas takovyx net, a **samomu stavit'** na den'gi departamenta, chem zanimaetsja Kremeneckij, daby poluchat' vneocherednye nagrady, – uvol'te, ne stanu. (J. Semenov, *Nepremerimost'*)  
 I printing.houses not arrest because, dear sir Evstratij Pavlovich, that at us such not, but self-DAT put-INF-IMPERF on money.of.department, what engaged.in Kremeneckij, in.order receive out-of-order reward, – if.you.please, not will.be

---

<sup>245</sup> <http://kulichki-lat.rambler.ru/moshkow/NIKITINYU/rage.txt>

*Meaning and interpretation of the DI-construction*

I don't arrest printing houses because, dear sir Evstratij Pavlovich, we don't have such printing houses, and to organize something with the money of the department, in order to get a useless reward, which Kremeneckij is doing, I won't do, if you please.'

*stat'* with *sam* in the nominative

- (455) On dazhe drat'sja ne stanet sam.<sup>246</sup> (R. Zheljazny, *Znaki dorogi*)  
he-NOM even fight not will.be self-NOM  
'He won't even start fighting himself.'

Below, I will say more about the cases with a dative.

*(iii) Passives*

Neidle (198: 127) argues that in the case of passives the second dative is strongly favored over the nominative:

- (456) On byl ugovoren prijti \*odin/ ?odnomu. (Neidle, 1988: 127)  
he was persuaded to come alone-NOM/ ?alone-DAT  
'He was persuaded to come alone.'

Sentences like these, however, are rather 'constructed'.

*(iv) With the DI-construction with first datives*

The second dative occurs in the case of the DI-construction:

- (457) Mne eshche odnomu domoj vozvrashchat'sja.  
I-DAT still alone-DAT home return  
'I still have to go back home alone.'

In this sentence the case of the second dative agrees with the case of the first dative.

---

<sup>246</sup> <http://www.moshkow.pp.ru:5000/lat/ZELQZNY/roadmark.txt>

*(v) With overt subordinators*

The second dative occurs with subordinators such as the conjunction of purpose *chtoby*, the conditional complementizer *esli*, and the conjunction of anteriority *prezhde chem*:

- (458) Xotel ot nas otdelat'sja, da? Chtoby **samomu uliznut'**, kak pytalsja vchera?<sup>247</sup> (R. Zheljazny, *Dolina Prokljatij*)  
 wanted from us escape, yes? In.order self-DAT slip.away-INF-PERF, how tried yesterday  
 'You wanted to escape us, didn't you? So that you could slip away by yourselves, like you tried yesterday.'
- (459) Odin iz vyvodov po povodu ceny podobnoj veshchi – kak minimum \$7000, libo \$3000 **esli delat' samomu**.<sup>248</sup>  
 one of conclusions with regard price of.such things – as a.minimum \$7000 or \$3000 if do-INF-IMPERF yourself-DAT  
 'One of the things that we can conclude about the price of such things is that it will cost \$7000 as a minimum, or \$3000 if you do it yourself.'
- (460) Vskore do Èddi doshlo, chto èto – ta samaja fraza, kotoruju Roland probormotal togda na poljane, gde Sjuzanna vyrubila medvedja, prezhde, chem **samomu otrubit'sja**.<sup>249</sup> (S. King, *Temnaja bashnja*)  
 soon till Eddy come, that that – that same phrase that Roland mumble then on glade, where Suzanna cut down bear, before himself-DAT crumble.down-INF-PERF  
 'Eddy soon understood that it was the same phrase that Roland had mumbled on the glade, where Suzanne had slaughtered the bear, before he crumbled down himself.'

In such sentences the second dative is co-referential with the subject expressed in the main clause, or if no subject is expressed, with a generic agent.

*(vi) With nouns and finite verbs*

The second dative occurs when the infinitive is a specification to a noun; below some examples offered by Neidle are given:

<sup>247</sup> <http://www.moshkow.pp.ru:5000/lat/ZELQZNY/damnatio.txt>

<sup>248</sup> [http://www.enlight.ru:8005/ib/news/17.05.1999\\_23.05.1999.html](http://www.enlight.ru:8005/ib/news/17.05.1999_23.05.1999.html)

<sup>249</sup> Internet site: <http://mslib.mos.ru/moshkow/lat/KING/bash3.txt>

*Meaning and interpretation of the DI-construction*

- (461) Popytka **konchit'** rabotu **odnomu** ne uvenchalas' uspexom. (Neidle, 1988: 142)  
attempt finish-INF-PERF work alone-DAT not crowned with.success  
'The attempt to finish work alone, wasn't crowned with success.'
- (462) Samoe vazhnoe – umenie **rabotat'** **odnomu**. (Neidle, 1982: 416)  
most important – ability work-INF-IMPERF alone-DAT  
'The most important thing is the ability to work alone.'
- (463) U Koli net sil **prijti samomu**. (Neidle, 1982: 394)  
around Kolja there.is.not strength come-INF-PERF alone-DAT  
'Kolja doesn't have the strength to come alone.'

Franks notes that in some cases the nominative can occur (I will discuss his examples below). I have attested the following cases where both a nominative and a dative occur; compare:

*Vozmozhnost'* + nominative

- (464) Esli rasprostranitel' imeet vozmozhnost' **sam razmnozhat'** nomer – ja vysylaju emu lish' odin ekzempljar, kotoryj on razmnozhaet i rassylaet.<sup>250</sup>  
if distributor has possibility self-NOM duplicate-INF-IMPERF number – I send him just one copy, that he duplicates and sends.away  
'If the distributor has the possibility to duplicate the journals himself, I'll just send him one copy, that he can duplicate and distribute.'

*Vozmozhnost'* + dative

- (465) ... u russkogo chitatelja pojavilas' vozmozhnost' **samomu razobrat'sja** v voprose o podlinnosti opublikovannyx tekstov ...<sup>251</sup> (V. Demin, *Tajny russkogo naroda*)  
... at Russian reader appeared possibility self-DAT understand-INF-PERF in question over originality of.published texts  
'... the possibility appeared for the Russian reader to decide himself whether the published texts are original ...'

---

<sup>250</sup> <http://sf.glasnet.ru:8105/tc/vesty/vesty01.htm>

<sup>251</sup> <http://lib.nordnet.ru/lat/DEMIN/tajny.txt>

*Sila* + nominative

- (466) Vse v moej dushe burno kipelo; ja chuvstvoval, chto ego iz ètogo vzniknet novyj porjadok, no ne imel sil **sam** ego **navesti**.<sup>252</sup> (M. Shelli, *Frankenshtejn ili Sovremennij Prometej*)  
 (...) but not had strength self-NOM him direct-INF-PERF  
 'Everything in my soul was boiling stormily; I felt that from this a new order would develop, but I didn't have the strength to direct it myself.'
- (467) Edva tol'ko Dava-Dorchzhi priobretaet sil **sam nadet'** sapogi, on берет kotelok.<sup>253</sup> (V. Ivanov, *Vozvrashchenie Buddy*)  
 (...) will.gain strength self-NOM dress-INF-PERF boots, he takes kettle  
 'As soon as Dava-Dorchzhi gains the strength to put his boots on himself, he takes the kettle.'

*Sila* + dative:

- (468) ... u menja ne xvatile by sil **samomu najti i nazhat'** nuzhnuju knopku.<sup>254</sup> (K. Lomer, *Planeta katastrof*)  
 ... at me not be.sufficient IRR strength self-DAT find-INF-PERF and press-INF-PERF necessary button  
 '... I wouldn't have had enough strength to find and press the necessary button myself.'
- (469) Ja ne mogu odin kazhdyj den' byt' so vsemi vami; mne nedostaet sil **odnomu besedovat'** s takim mnozhestvom.<sup>255</sup> (Religious site about Lazarus)  
 (...), I-DAT lack strength alone-DAT talk-INF-IMPERF with such multitude  
 'I can't be alone with you all every day, I lack the strength to talk alone with so many people.'

In this case the second dative is co-referential with the non-specified infinitive agent.

The second dative can also occur as a complement to reflexive verbs, e.g.:

- (470) Pol'zovatelju ne razreshaetsja **samomu zadavat'** parol'.<sup>256</sup>

<sup>252</sup> <http://www.moshkow.pp.ru:5000/lat/INPROZ/SHELLI/frankenshtejn.txt>

<sup>253</sup> <http://moshkov.orsk.ru/Library/lat/IWANOWWS/budda.txt>

<sup>254</sup> <http://icc.migsv.ru/library/lat/LAUMER/plcatast.txt>

<sup>255</sup> <http://www.magister.msk.ru:8085/library/bible/comment/zlatoust/zlato047.htm>

<sup>256</sup> [http://www.lito.sammit.kiev.ua:8105/docs/rfc1244/rfc\\_4\\_3.htm](http://www.lito.sammit.kiev.ua:8105/docs/rfc1244/rfc_4_3.htm)

user-DAT not permitted-REFL self-DAT give-INF-IMPERF code  
'The user is not permitted to give the code himself.'

In this sentence the second dative is co-referential with the indirect object of the finite verb. In some cases no indirect object is expressed, e.g.:

(471) **Samomu delat'** èto ne rekomenduetsja.<sup>257</sup>  
self-DAT do-INF-IMPERF that not recommends-REFL  
'It is not recommended that you do it yourself.'

In this sentence the indirect object of the finite verb (something is recommended *to someone*) is interpreted as the generic agent and as co-referential with the (generic) non-expressed infinitive subject.

(vii) *With infinitival complements without dative subject*

The second dative further occurs in the case of infinitives that function as complements, e.g.:

(472) **Uzhe i èto slishkom mnogo dlja menja – samomu xranit'** svoi mnenija (...).<sup>258</sup> (F. Nicshe, *Tak govoril Zaratustra*)  
already that too much for me – self-DAT keep-INF-IMPERF own opinion (...)  
'That is already too much for me – to keep my opinion to myself.'

#### **4.17.2 Motivation for the second dative in formal frameworks**

In the syntactic literature the occurrence of the second dative has received considerable attention from scholars working in a variety of frameworks, but mainly in the so-called 'formal' frameworks such as Generative Grammar (e.g. Comrie, 1974; Franks, 1990; Schoorlemmer, 1995) and Lexical Functional Grammar (Neidle, 1982, 1988). The general problem addressed by these scholars is how one can motivate the distribution of the second dative. I will now briefly discuss some of these analyses, and then present my own analysis. The aim of this section is to show the advantages of semantic approaches to the occurrence of the second dative compared with 'formal' approaches.

---

<sup>257</sup> [http://lat.www.citycat.ru/funny/fido/1998\\_06/02.html](http://lat.www.citycat.ru/funny/fido/1998_06/02.html)

<sup>258</sup> <http://moshkov.donetsk.ua/lat/NICSHE/zaratustra.txt>

The first formal analysis of the second dative is given by Comrie (1974). His analysis is based on two rules:

- (i) The case of the non-expressed infinitive subject (PRO) is dative.
- (ii) The main verb and a subjective infinitive form a cohesive unit, in the sense that the agreement in case between PRO and the semipredicative is blocked, and there is case agreement between the subject of the main verb and the semipredicative.

In Comrie's (1974) analysis infinitives must be seen as subordinate clauses (S'); in the case of subjective infinitives, the infinitive clause (S') is turned into a VP by a rule of restructuring. Since the infinitive occurs in a VP, *odin* and *sam* do not agree in case with PRO, but agree in case with the nominative subject of the matrix verb.

Comrie (1974: 132–33) argues that the postulation of non-expressed infinitive subjects in the dative case can be motivated by the occurrence of dative infinitive subjects in Old Church Slavonic, and the occurrence of dative infinitive subjects in modern Russian. Comrie (1974: 132) remarks that “[e]ven in modern Russian we find examples of an overt subject, in the dative, mainly where the dependent infinitive also has a complementizer, e.g. in time and purpose clauses”. Comrie gives sentence (10) as an example of such a dative. Note that Comrie does not motivate the occurrence of the dative in such contexts by pointing at the semantics of the dative, notwithstanding the fact that the dative-infinitive construction has a modal meaning in all its instances, that can be motivated by the interaction of the meaning of the infinitive and the meaning of the dative (see my analysis of such cases in 4.11). As I will argue below, the exclusion of semantics here leads to an incomplete analysis.

Comrie's (1974) analysis is partly followed by Franks (1990), while Schoorlemmer (1995) follows the analysis given by Franks. Franks rejects the idea that the subject of the infinitive must be implicitly dative, and that case can be assigned to PRO; instead he argues that the dative case is assigned directly to the second dative if nominative agreement with its controller is blocked by one of the following factors: (a) the absence of anaphoric (i.e. subject) control; (b) the presence of an overt complementizer; and (c) the absence of a nominative controller. Franks proposes that agreement is possible only when the understood PRO subject of an infinitival clause is lexically governed and that the second dative arises only when the second predicate appears in a full CP (=S') clause. Franks too does not take account of the semantics of the dative or the infinitive in the analysis of the second dative.

Schoorlemmer (1995: 64) makes a distinction between sentences where the dative has no experiencer semantics (the so-called ‘structural dative’, where the dative case is assigned to subjects of infinitival clauses only) and sentences where it has experiencer semantics. These latter are sentences with overt or non-overt adverbial predicates. A problem with Schoorlemmer’s analysis is, however, that it remains unclear in which cases the dative has experiencer semantics and in which cases it does not.

Neidle (1982, 1988) gives an analysis of the second dative in the model of Lexical Functional Grammar, in which she takes Comrie’s (1974) analysis as her starting point. Following Comrie (1974), she treats the forms *sam* and *odin* as adjuncts, and assigns the dative case to infinitival subjects (PRO) (Neidle, 1988: 187). Neidle rejects the hypothesis proposed by Comrie (1974) that all infinitives must be seen as sentences (S’), and that the assignment of the nominative case to *sam* and *odin* in subjective infinitive sentences can be motivated by a rule of restructuring. Instead, she argues that one should distinguish between VP and S’ infinitivals; VP infinitivals must be seen as verbal complements (VCOMPs) whose subjects are supplied within functional structure by the control equations. The rule for agreement within functional structure is stated as follows: “an adjunct agrees in case with its functional subject, which is identical with some other grammatical function within its clause nucleus” (Neidle, 1982: 419). This rule says that the dative case is assigned to *odin* and *sam* in clauses without subject, or in clauses with a dative subject; in clauses without object the infinitive must be seen as a VP, such that PRO is assigned the nominative case. The rule given here, however, cannot account for so-called objective infinitives, where *odin* and *sam* always occur in the dative case. Neidle solves this problem as follows. She argues that in Russian there is a rule that there is no object control of VCOMPs (Neidle, 1988: 134–135). This means that in objective infinitive sentences with an accusative object (e.g. *prosit’*) or a dative indirect object (e.g. *velet’*), the infinitive clause must be seen as an S’, such that PRO is assigned the dative case. Neidle’s (1982, 1988) argumentation can thus be summarized as follows: (i) PRO is dative; (ii) *sam* and *odin* are adjuncts; (iii) an adjunct agrees in case with its functional subject, which is identical with some other grammatical function within its clause nucleus; (iv) there is no object control in Russian.

In my opinion the analyses given above are characterized by the following interrelated shortcomings:

- (i) Non-motivated rules are postulated to explain the linguistic phenomenon in question.

- (ii) Model-theoretic notions that are postulated as explanatory devices have in fact no real explanatory value, because they are partly defined in terms of the phenomena they aim to describe and explain.
- (iii) Linguistic phenomena that are formally unified (different occurrences of the dative case) are treated as non-related phenomena, such that arbitrary distinctions between linguistic data are made.
- (iv) The models do not adequately explain the occurrence of the second dative, and make the wrong predictions.

An example of (i) is the rule given in Comrie (1972) and Neidle (1982, 1988) that the case assigned to the non-expressed infinitive subject (PRO) is dative. I already argued above against this rule, since it is not semantically-conceptually motivated, and does not make the correct observations in some cases, especially in the case of the nominative-infinitive construction. Furthermore, this rule necessitates the postulation of other non-motivated rules, to account for cases where the dative cannot be expressed with the infinitive.

An example of (ii) is the rule that explains the occurrence of the second dative by stating that the second dative occurs, under some specific conditions, if the infinitive constituent is a sentence ( $S'$ ) (e.g. Franks, 1990). In my opinion, this rule makes the correct observation that the occurrence of the second dative is connected with the predicative status of the infinitive clause. However, the rule has no explanatory value: the sentential status ( $S'$ ) of the infinitive with a second dative is the result of the meaning of the second dative and the infinitive, and not its cause. Language users cannot learn and follow some rule that predicts in which cases the dative case is assigned to second predicates on the basis of some unexplained notion of sentencehood. Rather, in order for the notion of sentencehood to have explanatory value, an explanation must be given, independently from the occurrence of the dative, of what the criteria are for sentencehood.

An example of (iii) can be found in Schoorlemmer (1995), who explicitly makes a distinction between dative case with experiencer semantics, and dative case without experiencer semantics, the so-called structural dative case. In my opinion, such an analysis makes arbitrary distinctions, and does not account for the fact that all uses of the dative case have particular semantic features in common.

An example of (iv) is that the proposed analyses do not adequately motivate the occurrence of the second dative in the case of some subjective infinitives. Neidle's

analysis does not account for instances of the dative with subjective infinitives (e.g. with *norovit*) or for instances of the nominative with deverbal nominals.

The analyses of the second dative discussed above are all characterized by the fact that they do not take the *meaning* of the dative and the *meaning* of the infinitive into account in motivating of the case assignment to the second predicates *odin* and *sam*. I will argue that the shortcomings outlined above can be resolved if we try to motivate the occurrence of the second dative on the level of conceptualization. The addition of the level of conceptualization to the syntactic analysis provides a deeper understanding and motivates the occurrence of the dative without needing to postulate non-motivated additional rules. The specific proposition that I wish to make is that the second dative has *experiencer semantics*, and that one can account for the occurrence of the second dative by the meaning of the infinitive and that of the dative.

In those cases where a dative subject occurs, the second dative can best be seen as a modifier of the dative subject (first dative) of the infinitive predicate, agreeing in case with the dative subject (cf. Neidle, 1988). In those cases where no dative subject occurs, the second dative must be seen as the modification of a contextually given subject, which is associated with PRO. Although the second dative can be seen as a modifier of the dative subject, the distribution of the second dative differs from that of the first dative, as in many cases the second dative occurs where no first dative occurs. This can be motivated by the difference in meaning and function between the second dative and the first dative subject. In many sentences where the second dative is expressed, the first dative is not expressed, because the identity of PRO can be inferred from the context. An example of this can be seen in sentences (458) and (460) above, where the infinitive occurs with subordinators. In these sentences the identity of PRO can either be inferred from the main clause, or is interpreted as a non-specified agent. This differs from the forms *sam* ('self') and *odin* ('alone'), whose special lexical attribution cannot be inferred from the context, and is therefore necessarily expressed. As I will show below, in some special cases one also finds a first dative subject in the case of subordinators; such sentences have a modal character.

In those cases where the dative can be seen as the subject of the infinitive, the infinitive action is *assigned* to the participant expressed in the dative, which presupposes the idea of some *force*. In such cases one can speak of an association or unification of PRO with the dative participant. The force that assigns the action to the participant may be a person, script, expected course of events, the speaker, etc., and is contextually given.

As I have argued before, the assignment of a situation type to some participant in the dative creates a predicative relationship: the situation is related to the participant that is to

realize the infinitive situation. The predicative moment that is constituted by relating the infinitive predicate to the dative subject, creates the idea of a phenomenon perceived in time; this phenomenon can be seen as the ‘verbal’ element of the construction.

Unlike Franks (1990) and Neidle (1988), I do not find that the notion of sentencehood (S') has any explanatory status in the analysis of the second dative. The assignment of the dative case to the second predicates *odin* and *sam* can be motivated on the basis of the semantics of the relevant forms (infinitive, lexical meaning of *sam* and *odin*, dative) and the meaning of oppositional forms (meaning of the other cases). Hence, the resulting sentencehood (S') of the infinitive clause is only the result of the conceptualization under discussion, and not its cause.

Below I will discuss the different contexts for the second dative, and discuss why one can speak of experiencer semantics in these cases. I will show that the dative case is assigned to *odin* and *sam* when they are unified with PRO; in those cases where a (first) subject dative is expressed, there is agreement between the second dative and the subject dative.

### 4.17.3. Semantic motivation for the second dative

#### 4.17.3.1 Objective infinitives and subjective infinitives

The typical context for the second dative is exemplified by sentences which express that a force is directed at the occurrence of an action by another agent. This is the case for example with the objective infinitive (446)–(449). The infinitive and the second dative form a complement to a finite predicate with the function of object. The non-expressed agent of the infinitive is unified with the second dative predicate, and co-referential with the dative indirect object or accusative object of the finite verb. The occurrence of the semipredicative in the dative case is natural, since the finite verb expresses an action *directed* at the occurrence of the infinitive action by the dative participant: subject participant does action<sub>1</sub> such that (indirect) object participant does action<sub>2</sub>.

The second dative does not occur in the case of subjective infinitives because in this construction (a) the subject of the main verb, and the subject of the infinitive are coreferential, and (b) the main verb and the infinitive form a close conceptual unit; in the case of phasal predicates because these predicates indicate a phase of an already given infinitive situation; in the case of modal verbs like *moch'* ('can') and *xotet'* ('want') because the infinitive expresses the *content* of the state expressed by the main predicate, rather than a situation at whose realization the phenomenon expressed by the main verb is directed.

Put differently, it is not that one ‘wishes’ or ‘is able’ *in order* to realize the infinitive action, but rather the wish or the ability are characterized *in terms of* the infinitive situation; that is, the concept expressed by the main predicate and the concept expressed by the infinitive cannot be independently conceptualized, but are manifestations of the same scene.

As I have shown above, there are exceptions to the rule that the nominative occurs in the case of subjective infinitives. On the basis of the examples that I have attested, I would suggest motivating the dative here by two interdependent features, viz. (i) the scene expressed by the dative and the infinitive must be interpretable in terms of features of the basic Dative-Infinitive meaning, especially the idea of ‘directedness’, and (ii) the infinitive in these sentences is conceptually more independent from the main verb than in the cases with a nominative, that is, the realization of the infinitive situation is conceptualized independently from the concept expressed by the main-verb.

A reading with either a dative or a nominative is possible with the verbs *reshit’* and *norovit’* because these verbs can express both the idea of an action characterized in terms of the *content* of another action, and an action that is *directed* at the realization of another action; in the latter instance the dative case can be chosen.

I suppose that the dative is chosen in (450) because of the addition *esli ke ètomu ne vernetsja Dik*; this addition restricts the realization of the infinitive situation to a specific condition, focusing on the fact that the infinitive situation is not already implied by the decision itself, but only occurs under specific conditions. Such a reading is impossible in (451) with a nominative, because in this sentence there is no indication of restrictive conditions, and the infinitive just expresses the content of the action denoted by the main verb.

The dative in (452) can be motivated in a similar way to that in (450). In this sentence the subject of the main verb combines all his efforts *in order* for the infinitive situation to be realized; note that one can speak of a restriction here as well (situation X, in stead of Y). In (453), with a nominative, the action expressed by the main verb and the action expressed by the infinitive are co-occurring, that is, the scene expressed by *norovit’* cannot be conceptualized independently from the scene expressed by the infinitive. Put differently, the scene expressed by *norovit’* (‘aiming’) constitutes the potential beginning of the action expressed by the infinitive (‘forcing yourself into the field of filming’).

For the occurrence of the dative in (454) a different motivation has to be given, probably in terms of the topical status of the infinitive clause. In this sentence the interpretation of the infinitive as a complement of the finite verb is a reinterpretation or ‘resumption’. The infinitive situation has not been realized at the moment of speaking,

but only put forward by the speaker as something that could in principle be realized. I will discuss the function of the second dative in complement-sentences below.<sup>259</sup>

#### 4.17.3.2 Passives and Modal infinitives

For passives like (456), an analysis similar that of the objective infinitive can be given. In (456) the logical subject of *ugovoren* (viz. people) can be seen as a force directed at the realization of the infinitive action.

A similar analysis can be given for the occurrence of the second dative with ‘modal infinitives’, or DI-construction, as in (457). In this construction the infinitive and the dative subject form a clause with a modal character. In such sentences PRO is unified with the dative subject (first dative); here the second dative agrees in case with the dative subject. The dative case is the optimal case for this construction, since the DI-construction expresses the idea of a force (norm, plan, script, way things go, etc.) directed at the realization of the infinitive situation.

It must be remarked that the modal nature of such sentences is sometimes difficult to grasp, especially in sentences where no first dative is expressed. Consider the following sentence, which according to Schoorlemmer (1995: 64) has a so-called structural dative case, that is, a dative without experiencer semantics:

- (473) Ivan ne imeet predstavlenija o tom [kak [PRO zhit' odnomu]].  
 Ivan not has notion about that how live-INF-IMPERF alone-DAT  
 ‘Ivan doesn’t have a clue about how to live alone.’

In my opinion the statement that the dative has no experiencer semantics is incorrect. This sentence has a modal character, which can be made clear by a paraphrase with a modal form: ‘Ivan doesn’t have a clue how he *should* live alone.’ In this sentence the dative occurs because it is expressed that Ivan does not know what he must do such that he will do the infinitive action. Note that in sentences like these the subject dative may also be expressed: *Ivan ne imeet predstavlenija o tom kak EMU zhit' odnomu.*

---

<sup>259</sup> Possibly one can speak of an ‘alternative situation’ here as well.

#### 4.17.3.3. Infinitives with subordinators

The second dative also has experiencer semantics in sentences with subordinators such as *aschtoby* ('in order'), *prezhdde chem* ('before') and *esli* ('if'). Consider the following sentence given by Franks (1990: 244):

- (474) Ljuba priexala [CP *chtoby* [[IP PRO *pokupat' maslo \*sama/ samoj*]].  
Ljuba arrived in.order buy-INF-IMPERF buy butter \*self-NOM/ self-DAT  
'Ljuba arrived in order to buy some butter herself.'

Franks (1990) and Schoorlemmer (1995) treat the dative here as having no experiencer semantics. Again, in my opinion this is incorrect. This sentence expresses that the subject of the matrix clause performs an action *directed at* the occurrence of some other action put differently, the action expressed in the matrix clause *enables* the action expressed in the infinitive clause. As I discussed earlier in 4.11.2, a first dative can be expressed in such sentences if particular conditions are met.

A motivation for the second dative in terms of experiencer semantics can also be given for sentences with the subordinators *esli* and *prezhdde chem*, as in (459) and (460). In these cases the experiencer semantics of the second dative has a more abstract nature, because the force that directs at the occurrence of the infinitive action cannot be identified with a specific person, but rather with something like 'the expected course of events' or the speaker of the sentence.

In the case of *prezhdde chem*, as in (460), the idea of 'experiencer' is connected with the fact that *prezhdde chem* focuses the conceptualization on a moment before the realization of an expected action. In such sentences the dative case is assigned to the non-expressed infinitive agent (PRO) because the expected course of events can be seen as the force that assigns the action to the agent. As I discussed above the first dative (subject dative) can occur with the conjunction of anteriority *pered tem, kak*. Such sentences have a clearer ontic nature and express that according to some script the action is due to happen.

For sentences with *esli* a similar motivation can be given. In the case of *esli*, as in (459), an action type is assigned to the participant expressed in the dative (x does not do Y now, but the speaker assigns the action to the infinitive agent in a hypothetical world). It is expressed that in those worlds where the course of events is such that x will do Y, some other situation is also the case. As I argued above in 4.11.3, sentences with *esli* can also occur with first datives. In such cases the first dative is triggered by the presupposition that the action will possibly not take place in reality because (a) the

speaker thinks it is very unlikely that the infinitive action will happen, or (b) he wants to take into account the possibility of refusal to do the infinitive action.

#### 4.17.3.4 Infinitive specifications to nouns and predicates

The second dative also has experiencer semantics in sentences where the infinitive must be seen as a specification to a noun. In such constructions the non-expressed agent of the infinitive is unified with the second dative and is co-referential with the non-expressed generic agent (461)–(462), or with a genitive ‘subject’ (463). Contrary to Franks (1990) and Schoorlemmer (1995), I think that the occurrence of the dative in these sentences is motivated by the experiencer semantics of the dative. In all cases the noun is characterized by the infinitive; this characterization is connected with the realization of the action type expressed by the infinitive. In (461): the ability that *allows* the subject to work. In (462): the attempt *directed at* the realization of the infinitive action. In (463): the strength that allows the realization of the infinitive action to happen.

Franks (1990: 245) mentions the possibility of the nominative case with these nouns. He argues that in some specific contexts the infinitive can occur in the nominative case, also when it can be seen as the complement to some head. Compare (475)–(477) versus (478)–(480):

- (475) Ivan prinjal reshenie [PRO prijti na vecherinku odin]. (Franks (1990: 245))  
Ivan took decision [PRO come-INF-PERF to party alone-NOM]  
‘Ivan took the decision to come to the party alone.’
- (476) Ivan dal obeshchanie [PRO prijti na vecherinku odin]. (Franks (1990: 245))  
Ivan gave promise [PRO come-INF-PERF to party alone-NOM]  
‘Ivan gave his promise that he would come to the party alone.’
- (477) Ivan vyrazil zhelanie [PRO prijti na vecherinku odin]. (Franks (1990: 245))  
Ivan uttered wish [PRO come-INF-PERF on party alone-NOM]  
‘Ivan uttered his wish that he wanted to come to the party alone.’
- (478) Soldat poluchil prikaz [PRO poexat’ v gorod \*odin/ odnomu]. (Franks, 1990: 245)  
soldier received order [PRO come-INF-PERF to city \*alone-NOM/ alone-DAT]  
‘The soldier received the order to come to the city alone.’
- (479) Ivan poprosil razreshenija [PRO prijti na vecherinku \*odin/ odnomu]. (Franks, 1990: 245)

Ivan asked permission [PRO come-INF-PERF to party \*alone-NOM/ alone-DAT  
'Ivan asked permission to come to the party alone.'

- (480) Ivan vyrazil svoe zhelanie [PRO prijti na vecherinku \*odin/ odnomu]. (Franks, 1990: 245)

Ivan uttered his wish [PRO come-INF-PERF to the party \*alone-NOM/ alone-DAT]  
'Ivan uttered his wish to come to the party alone.'

Franks (*ibid.*) suggests that in the first sentences the verb-noun sequence is being restructured into a complex verb. In my opinion such an analysis is just a trick, since it remains unclear what the criteria are for such restructuring. Instead, I would suggest looking at the different types of predicates in these sentences, and the different conceptualizations underlying the dative and the nominative.

The dative is typical of cases where a force is directed at the *coming into being* of a situation. Such a context is clear in (478) and (479): In (478) the soldier receives an order that can be seen as a *force* that *makes him do* an action; in (479) Ivan asks permission such that he will be *able* to go to the party alone. Put differently, the order is a force directed at the realization of the infinitive action; the permission is also a force directed at the realization of the infinitive action.

A different conceptualization can be found in the sentences with a nominative second predicate. In (475) and (476) one cannot speak of a force that is directed at the coming into being of the action expressed by the infinitive. In (475) it is expressed that Ivan took the decision *that* he would come to the party alone. In (476) Ivan gives the promise *that* he will come to the party alone.

Although in my opinion an analysis of the phenomenon in question in terms of the meaning of the dative and that of the nominative is essential, the precise factors that determine the assignment of case in these sentences are not fully clear to me. It remains unclear for example to me how the difference in case assignment between (477) and (480) can be motivated. On the basis of the meaning of the dative and the nominative, and the examples of the same phenomenon discussed above, one could argue that the nominative is chosen in (477) because the infinitive clause (*prijti na vecherinku odin*) can be seen as the content of the wish: Ivan uttered his wish *that* he wants to come to the party alone. In this a dative is not chosen because the utterance of his wish is not directed at the realization of the infinitive action. In the same vein it could be argued that in (480) the dative is chosen because here the expression of the wish is directed at the realization of the infinitive action: Ivan uttered his wish *such that* he will come to the party alone. Yet, it remains unclear, how the expression of the

possessive pronoun *svoj* ('own') contributes to this last reading. I suspect that the expression of *svoj* ('own') focuses attention on the perspective of the subject of the wish, through which the subject is conceptualized as a force that is directed at the realization of the infinitive action. Compare the following sentences:

- (481) [P]restupnik ne tol'ko ne xotel opravdyvat'sja, no dazhe kak by iz"javljal zhelanie **sam** eshche bolee **obvinit'** sebja.<sup>260</sup> (F. Dostoevskij, *Prestuplenie i nakazanie*)  
 criminal not only not wanted justify.himself, but even how IRR express-INF-IMPERF wish self-NOM more blame-INF-PERF self  
 'The criminal not only wanted not to justify himself, but seemed to express his wish to blame himself even more.'
- (482) On oshchushchal nekoje upoitel'noe sostojanie legkoj bezmjatezhnosti, slaboj ustalosti, kogda ne to chto by net sil podnjat'sja, net, sily est', no net ni malejshego zhelanija vstavat', dejstvovat', komu-to chto-to dokazyvat', kogo-to ot chego-to zashchishchat' i **zashchishchat'sja samomu**.<sup>261</sup> (B. Tolchinskij, *Narbonnskij vepr*)  
 he felt some delightful state of.light serenity, of weak weakness, when not that what IRR not strength get.up, no, strength is, but not not slightest desire rise-INF-IMPERF, act-INF-IMPERF, someone something prove-INF-IMPERF, someone from something protect and protect.oneself self-DAT  
 'He felt a delightful state of light serenity, a light weakness, not like he didn't have any strength to get up, no, he had the strength, but he didn't have the slightest desire to act, to prove something to anyone, to protect anyone from anyone, and to protect himself.'

In (481) the occurrence of the nominative can be motivated by the fact that it is not expressed that the subject expressed his wish in order to realize the infinitive situation, but it is expressed that the content of his wish is to blame himself even more.

The analysis that I have given here for difference in meaning between the nominative and the dative can be extended to the sentences with the nouns *vozmozhnost'* ('possibility'). With *vozmozhnost'* the nominative with *odin* and *sam* is natural (e.g. (464)), and at least strongly preferred, if the infinitive occurs with the verb *imet'* ('to have'). In this construction the second predicate together with the infinitive expresses the content of the possibility, rather than the situation that is enabled by the possibility. A different conceptualization can be found in (465), where a dative occurs. Here, the dative can be motivated by the occurrence of the main verb *pojavit'sja* ('to appear'). This verb focuses on

<sup>260</sup> <http://www.magister.msk.ru:8085/library/dostoevs/crimeand.htm>

<sup>261</sup> <http://www.moshkow.pp.ru:5000/lat/RUFANT/TOLCHINSKIJ/pax1.txt>

the *coming into being* of the infinitive situation; this conceptualization is typical of the combination of the dative and the infinitive.

Finally, I will make some observations about the construction with the noun *sila* (466)–(469). In the examples of this construction that I have attested, the nominative occurs in sentences where the infinitive must be seen as the specification or object-complement of a finite verb with a nominative subject. The dative occurs in sentences where the non-expressed agent of the infinitive is associated with a logical subject in the dative case or genitive case, and where *sila* + infinitive has the function of subject. The occurrence of the second dative must probably be motivated by the subject status of the infinitive in such cases, comparable to the status of the infinitive in the case of adverbial predicates. For a further discussion, see below.

#### 4.17.3.5 Complement-Specification to an adverbial predicate

The second dative also occurs in sentences with an adverbial predicate, as in (434) above. The non-expressed agent of the infinitive is unified with the second predicate and is co-referential with the dative subject of the adverbial predicate (if expressed at all). The occurrence of the second dative can be motivated by the experiencer semantics of such sentences. In such sentences it is expressed that the assignment of the infinitive situation to the participant in the second dative leads to the state expressed by the adverbial predicate, which is experienced by the subject of the infinitive action; the second dative agrees in case with the dative subject (if expressed at all).

The second datives do not occur in the case of states that have a nominative subject:

- (483) Ja dolzhen èto delat' sam/ \*samomu.  
I-NOM must-ADJ that do-INF self-ACC/ \*DAT  
'I must do that myself.'

The adjective *dolzhen* does not denote a state that is induced by some force, but portrays the necessity as a property of the subject. If the second dative were expressed in this sentence, this would lead to an interpretation where the realization of the action type expressed by the infinitive would lead to the state of the nominative subject; this interpretation clashes with the meaning of the nominative.

## 4.17.3.6 Complement

In my opinion sentences where the infinitive can be seen as a complement (472) have essentially the same structure as sentences with an adverbial predicate. In both cases the speaker assigns the infinitive situation to an agent in order to predicate about the situation; in the case of the sentences under discussion the agent remains unspecified (generic). Some cases can be seen as intermediate cases between specification to adverbial predicates and infinitive complements or predicates; this is the case for example in the following sentence:

- (484) Isxodja iz materialisticheskoy idei o tom, chto vremennoe udovletvorenije matpotrebnošej proizoshlo, možno perexodit' k udovletvoreniju duxpotrebnošej. To est' posmotret' kino, televizor, poslushat' narodnuju muzyku, ili **popet' samomu** i dazhe pochitat' kakuju-nibud' knigu, skazhem, 'Krokodil' ili tam gazetu.<sup>262</sup> (A.& B. Strugackie, *Ponedel'nik nachinaetsja v subbotu*)  
 proceeding from materialistic idea over that, that temporary satisfaction of material demands happened, can-ADV go over to satisfaction of mental demands. that is see-INF-PERF film, tv, listen-INF-PERF folk music, or sing-INF-PERF self-DAT and even read-INF-PERF some book, let's say, 'Crocodile' or there newspaper  
 'Proceeding from the materialistic idea that the material demands have been temporarily satisfied, one can move away to the satisfaction of mental demands. That is, see a film, watch tv, listen to folk music, or sing yourself, and even read some book, let's say, the 'Crocodile' or some newspaper.'

In this sentence the second dative can be motivated by the idea that the infinitive action is assigned to non-specified people in a hypothetical world (it is possible that people will do the infinitive actions).

## 4.17.4 Concluding remarks

In this analysis I have shown that the occurrence of the second dative can be analyzed on the level of conceptualization. In some cases my analysis is still tentative, but I think that the relevance of taking the semantics of the dative and the nominative into account in the syntactic analysis has been strongly underlined. I have shown that if we look at the meaning of the different constituents we can motivate the occurrence of the second dative in a natural way. The second dative is coreferential with, and agrees in case with

<sup>262</sup> <http://kulichki-lat.rambler.ru/moshkow/STRUGACKIE/ponedelx.txt>

the expressed or non-expressed subject of the infinitive. In all cases the occurrence of the dative can be motivated by the experiencer semantics of the dative and the meaning 'situation type' of the infinitive. The forms *odin* and *sam* occur in the dative case when there is some force directed at the realization of the infinitive situation by the participant expressed by *odin* or *sam*. This presupposes the idea of a scene where the agent is not performing the action, and a scene where the agent will perform the action, giving rise to the predicative feature of infinitive clauses with a dative subject.

As I have argued, the difference in case between infinitive complements to nouns in the dative and the nominative can be explained by pointing at a difference in conceptualization, and cannot be attributed to a difference in syntactic status of the infinitive complement, that is, the question of whether the infinitive occurs in a CP or not. Notions like CP or S' can be seen as theoretical terms for constituents associated with a predicative element. However, for the language user, who has to choose the correct case for *sam* and *odin*, the question of whether some constituent is an S' or not is irrelevant. The language user chooses the dative case if there is some force directed at the realization or coming into being of the infinitive action. The idea of coming into being associated with the combination of the dative and the infinitive creates a predicative moment, because the idea of being the recipient of an action type can be seen as a phenomenon in time. As such the status of clauses with a second dative can be compared to S'; this is not, however, an explanatory notion, but only a formulation of the predicativeness of the combination of the second dative with an infinitive

In this analysis I have not systematically addressed issues that are relevant if one wishes to account for the case assignment of second predicates. I will, however, just mention them here. Firstly, the assignment of case to second predicates, and more generally the assignment of case has changed diachronically. This suggests that the meaning of the different cases in Russian has changed. It is therefore important to address the question of whether my analysis can be falsified by looking at diachronic data. Secondly, the meaning of case differs structurally from many other meanings in the linguistic system, because of the clear-cut oppositional forms of a specific case. This differs from, for example, the phenomenon of lexical meaning; lexical meanings do not occur in a clear-cut and well-defined structure of oppositions, giving rise to the flexibility of lexical meaning. The process of assignment of case can best be analyzed in terms of choosing the most suitable case in the given context. As such, I think that a semantic analysis in terms of optimality would be appropriate for the meaning of case. Such an analysis would have to take into account the diachronic changes in the system of case assignment.

A final remark about the status of this analysis is in order. An analysis of syntactic phenomena in terms of the meanings of constituents is not an easy task, but that should not prevent the linguist from taking account of meaning in the syntactic analysis. In my opinion, the level of semantics and conceptualization is the basic level of language, and consequently is also basic to syntax. I do not think, however, that the level of semantics is in contradiction to analyses in models such as generative grammar; it must rather be considered a deeper level of analysis and motivation.

#### 4.18 Conclusion and further remarks

In this chapter I have presented a construction with an infinitive predicate, a dative subject and in some cases the auxiliary *byť*. The meaning of the DI-construction can be defined as follows.

**A force is directed at the realization of the situation expressed by the infinitive, of which the dative participant is the *potential* subject.**

I have argued that the language user interprets the abstract meaning in different ways, depending on the contexts in which this meaning occurs. The different uses of the DI-construction can be seen as *interpretations* of the combination of the dative meaning and the infinitive meaning. As such, the construction is not polysemous, but rather multi-interpretable.

The idea of recipienthood of a situation presupposes an initial information state where the dative participant is *not* associated with the realization of the infinitive situation (or in the case of negation, where the dative participant *is* associated with the realization of the infinitive situation), which is contradicted, that is, the realization of the infinitive situation by the dative participant is presented as something which accords with the normal or inevitable way things go, rather than as the result of the intention or tendency of the dative participant. Different basic interpretations of the construction (SD + INF<sub>pred</sub>) in affirmative sentences are given below:

- (i) SD + INF<sub>imperf/ action</sub> + context of epistemic imposing (*ved'*, *zbe esbche*, contrast, etc.) → According to some (DE)ONTIC FORCE the infinitive action will be realized

*Meaning and interpretation of the DI-construction*

- (ii) SD+ INF<sub>imperf/ state</sub> + context of epistemic imposing (presupposition that the situation might not be the case, *use ravno ne, uzbe ne*, etc.) → THE WAY THE THINGS GO is such that the situation will occur
- (iii) SD + INF<sub>perf</sub> + context of epistemic blocking (*ne, edva li, vjad li*) → CIRCUMSTANCES block the realization of an intended action (and impose [not INF])
- (iv) SD + INF<sub>perf</sub> + context of epistemic deblocking (contrast, *tol'ko, chtoby, xot'*) → THE CAPACITY OF THE DATIVE PARTICIPANT overcomes potential blocking by some force (there was a scene or presupposition where/ that the agent could not do the action); one can speak of an ENABLING FORCE if some blocking must be overcome.
- (v) SD + INF + *chtoby* + presupposition that effort is necessary to get dative participant to do the infinitive situation → GOAL ORIENTED FORCE directed at the (non) realizative of the infinitive situation
- (vi) SD + INF + *pered tem, kak* → THE EXPECTED, PLANNED WAY THINGS GO is directed at the realization of the infinitive situation
- (vii) SD + INF + *esli* + epistemic imposing or blocking (presupposition that the infinitive situation may in fact not be the case, on in the case of negation, be the case) → DEONTIC/ ONTIC FORCE is directed at the realization of the infinitive situation
- (viii) SD + INF + *by* + coordinate structure → THE WAY THE THINGS GO could have been such that the infinitive situation would have been the case
- (ix) SD + INF + *by* → THE SPEAKER imposes a situation on the dative participant in a counterfactual world (in a world desired by the speaker)
- (x) SD<sub>2/3</sub> + *tol'ko* + INF + *by* + → THE DATIVE PARTICIPANT 'imposes' a situation on himself in a counterfactual world (in that world where things go as the dative participant wants)
- (xi) SD<sub>nikomul vsem</sub> + INF → THE SPEAKER imposes a situation on the dative participant by directing the dative participant to realize the infinitive situation

Whether a scene can be conceptualized as falling under the DI-construction is not an ontological issue; in some cases the assignment of a dative subject to an infinitive predicate can only be motivated in terms of *information states*.

I have argued that the infinitive can be seen as the predicate of the DI-construction, in the sense that it expresses the situation that is associated with the potential agent, but that the predicative center is an *interpretation* and not expressed by a form. The

predicativity – the ‘modal’ idea of the construction – is the result of the unification of the non-expressed infinitive agent with the dative subject (or in those cases where no dative is expressed, with the contextually given agent). This means that no underlying modal operators or verbal heads can be posited for the construction. The modal nature of the construction must be seen as an interpretation of the construction, and cannot be attributed to one of the components, or to a non-expressed element. The use of modal logic operators in the analysis of modality is therefore insufficient.

Only by analyzing the meaning of the construction on the level of the individual components can the specific ontic character of the different uses, and the seemingly peculiar restriction of the possibility interpretation to specific contexts be motivated. Furthermore, motivation can be given for why some cases of the DI-construction do not have a clear modal meaning. Such cases can be seen as peripheral uses of the DI-construction, where some of the features of the basic meaning are backgrounded, and others highlighted.

Besides the DI-construction proper (with dative nouns or pronouns), I have also given a short analysis of cases with the dative form of the modifiers *sam* or *odin*. Although the analysis that I have given has a tentative character, I have argued that the assignment of the dative case to these forms can be motivated by taking account of the meaning of the DI-construction.

## CHAPTER V

---

### Conclusion

In this dissertation I have given an analysis of the meaning, use and interpretation of the Russian imperative and the Russian dative-infinitive construction. The purpose of this analysis is to show how the different uses of these forms or constructions are related to one another, and how one can account for their *interpretation*.

In my analysis I have maintained the traditional structuralist distinction between meaning and interpretation. Meanings must be seen as *abstractions* from different uses of a form, where the context-specific information is abstracted; that is, they must be seen as belonging to that which is a *variant*. The notion of abstraction used here can be seen as the traditional Aristotelian notion of abstraction, namely the omission of qualities. In my analysis I have defined two types of interpretations:

- (i) Specification
- (ii) Adjusting

In the case of *specification*, the interpretation can be seen as a specification of the (relatively) underspecified abstraction by means of the context. This specification is the result of the interaction between the abstraction and the information provided by the context. Put differently: the abstraction can be seen as an abstraction from such interpretations.

In the case of *adjusting*, the interpretation does not fall directly under the concept, or abstraction. Under the influence of the context, some features of the abstraction are selected while others are backgrounded (in other words, the meaning is *adjusted*). This means that the abstraction cannot be seen as an abstraction from such adjusted uses,

but rather such uses must be seen as *directly derived* from the information contained in the abstraction.

This linguistic analysis must be seen as a systematization of the linguistic uses, and conventional linguistic structure, rather than as a description of the knowledge of the language user, or as a description of the processing of language. The systematization of the conventions is cognitively based, which means that conventions are not quite deliberate. Nevertheless, there is a sufficiently broad area of indeterminacy to leave open a choice between different cognitively possible conventions. The linguistic possibilities are cognitively restricted on the basis of similarity, or partial identity, and contiguity; these restrain the use of linguistic expressions on the grounds of previous cases of use. This means that the linguistic analysis shows something about the understandability of uses in the light of previous cases of use of these uses.

Before analyzing the forms under discussion, in Chapter II I explained the structure of meaning by discussing how meanings are learned, and how they function in the linguistic structure. Following Bartsch (1999), I argued that in order for the linguistic structure to be stable, it is necessary that forms are associated with different concepts; however, this is only possible if different perspectives enable the language user to differentiate between them. It is also important that concepts are not overextended under a perspective, and that the use of an expression is delineated by oppositional forms.

I have argued that although forms are associated with different uses, it is possible in many cases to abstract from these different uses on different levels, and to define a general meaning. The general meaning can best be seen as a *frame* within which the different uses of an expression may occur. Such a frame cannot be seen as a definition, as it does not predict the possible uses of a word, but rather describes the common features of a word, which may stand in opposition to other uses. The notion of 'frame' points to two things: (i) the frame can be seen as a *restriction* on the use of a particular form, or put differently, a restriction on the extensions of a particular form, securing stability of the linguistic system; and (ii) it is within the possibilities provided by the frame that *different uses can be distinguished*. I have also argued that it is not possible to give an adequate answer to the question of *when* uses of a form can be seen as different since there are no clear and discrete criteria for distinguishing different uses.

The general findings and notions discussed in Chapter II, served as the basis for the linguistic analyses given in the following chapters. For the specific conclusions of Chapters III and IV, I refer the reader to these chapters. Here, I will confine myself to a summary and some general remarks.

## Conclusion

In Chapter III, I discussed the meaning and use of the Russian imperative. I gave a basic meaning of the imperative that can be seen as an abstraction from directive uses and hortative-optative uses. These uses have basic uses themselves, and extensions from these basic uses by the process of selection, and possibly in the case of the narrative imperative, cancelling of features under perspectives provided by contexts. The process of extension by feature selection (backgrounding, highlighting, and in the case of the narrative possibly cancelling) occurs in different degrees (corresponding to the number of selected features), such that some instances of the imperative can be seen as borderline cases between different uses. The different uses should therefore be seen as *usage types*. These usage types correspond to *context types*. Context types are constituted by collections of formal features that correspond to clear examples of different semantic types.

Although it is not possible to give a necessary and sufficient definition for all the uses of the imperative it is possible to abstract from the uses on different levels, and point at shared features of the different imperative uses, that do not occur with oppositional forms. The approach to the study of the imperative that I have advocated is an intermediate position between monosemous approaches and polysemous approaches. It shares with monosemous approaches the idea that some collection of features (viz. directivity) can be seen as a necessary and sufficient condition for the correct understanding (rather than correct use) of the imperative, and it shares with polysemous approaches the idea that different uses have a more or less independent status, and can be analyzed in terms of extensions of other uses.

In Chapter IV, I discussed the dative-infinitive construction. I showed how the different modal uses of the construction can be derived from its component parts, and how the distribution of the construction can be motivated by its meaning. I argued that the assignment of the dative to the infinitive predicate is always connected to an *ontic* modal meaning, that is, the realization of the infinitive situation by the dative participant is presented as something which is in accordance with the normal or inevitable way things go, rather than as the result of the intention or tendency of the dative participant. More specifically, I argued that the idea of recipienthood of a situation presupposes an initial information state where the dative participant is *not* associated with the realization of the infinitive situation (or in the case of negation, where the dative participant *is* associated with the infinitive situation), which is then contradicted.

I argued that the verbal or predicative element of the construction cannot be seen as a *meaning*, but must rather be seen as the *interpretation* that is the result of the association between the non-expressed infinitive agent and the dative subject. It is therefore incorrect

to posit modal logic operators, or non-expressed modal elements for the construction.

In my analysis I pointed at the shared features between the dative-infinitive construction proper (with dative nouns or pronouns), and the occurrence of the second dative. I argued that if the second dative is analyzed as a special instance of the DI-construction, it is possible to motivate its distribution. Such an analysis provides a deeper level of understanding than syntactic analysis that do not take meaning into account in a systematic way.

There are a number of topics that I did not investigate thoroughly in my analysis. Among them are (i) the issue of idiomatization, and (ii) the specific relation between general cognitive capacities and norms of language. The issue of idiomatization plays a part in the case of both the imperative and the dative-infinitive construction. The study of these forms may therefore be greatly assisted by investigating idiomatization in relation to (a) the meaning of these expressions and the linguistic structure in which they occur, and (b) the process of language change. Further research should also focus on how different conventional linguistic structures place different boundaries on similar cognitive-functional domains across languages, and what these cognitive domains or capacities exactly are. In my analysis I have pointed out some areas where such research might be interesting; for example the difference in use between nominalizations and infinitives in contexts where they are oppositional forms. Only by independent analysis of proposed cognitive capacities such as type construal, scanning, Gestalt construal, etc., and the actual use of forms in language, can the relation between cognition and semantics be clarified, and an answer given to the question concerning to which extent cognitive notions can have an explanatory value in the linguistic analysis.

---

## References

- ANS (Algemene Nederlandse Spraakkunst)*, 1984. Geerts, G. *et al.* (eds). Groningen: Wolters-Noordhoff.
- Apresjan, Ju.D. 1992. Leksikograficheskie portrety (na primere glagola *byt'*). In: *Inform. procesy i sistemy* 3, 20–33.
- Apresjan, Ju. D. & Iomdin, L.L. 1989. Konstrukcija tipa *negde spat'*: Sintaksis, semantika, leksikografija. In: Nesterov, P.V. (ed.) *Semiotika i informatika* 29, 34–92. Moskva: Viniti.
- Archangeli, D. & Langendoen, D.T. 1997. *Optimality Theory: An overview*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Armstrong, S.L., Gleitman, L. & Gleitman, H. 1983. What some concepts might not be. In: *Cognition* 13, 263–308.
- Baranov, A.N. & Kobozeva, I.M. 1983. Semantika obshchix voprosov v russkom jazyke (kategorija ustanovki). In: *Izvestija AN SSSR, Serija Literatury i Jazyka* 42(3), 263–274.
- Barbiers, S. 1995. *The syntax of interpretation*. Doctoral dissertation, HIL, Leiden University. The Hague: Holland Academic Graphics.
- Barentsen, A. 1985. *Tijd, 'aspect' en de conjunctie poka: Over betekenis en gebruik van enkele vormen in het moderne Russisch*. Doctoral dissertation: University of Amsterdam.
- Barentsen, A. *forthcoming*. In: Houtzagers, P. (ed.) *Handboek Russische grammatica*. Bussum: Coutinho.
- Bartsch, R. 1984. *The structure of word-meaning: Polysemy, metaphor, metonymy*. In: Landman, F. & Veltman, F. (eds) *Varieties of formal semantics*, 24–55. Dordrecht: Foris.
- Bartsch, R. 1996. The myth of literal meaning. In: Weigand, E. & Hundsnurscher, F. (eds) *Lexical structures and language use. Proceedings of the International Conference on Lexicology and Lexical Semantics*. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer.

- Bartsch, R. 1998. *Dynamic conceptual semantics: A logico-philosophical investigation into concept formation and understanding*. Stanford, CA: CSLI Publications.
- Belevitskaya-Khalizeva, V.S. 1965. *Exercises in Russian syntax: Compound and complex sentences*, Moscow: Progress.
- Birjulin, L.A. 1993. Sintakticheskoe predstavlenie russkogo impersonala (tipa svetaet): K istorii i teorii voprosa. In: *Russian Linguistics* 17, 181–203.
- Birjulin, L. 1994. *Semantika i pragmatika russkogo imperativa*. Helsinki: Department of Slavonic languages, University of Helsinki.
- Bondarko, A.V. 1990. *Teorija funkcional'noj grammatiki, temporal'nost' modal'nost'*. Leningrad: Izdavel'stvo Nauka.
- Bondarko, A.V. 1991. *Functional grammar: A field approach*. Amsterdam/ Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Bondarko, A.V. & Bulanin, L. 1967. *Russkij glagol*. Leningrad: Prosveshchenie.
- Bonnot, C.I. & Fougeron, I. 1982. L'accent de phrase initial en russe est-il toujours un signe d'expressivité ou de familiarité? In: *Bulletin de la Société de Linguistique de Paris* 87(1), 309–330.
- Borkovskij, V.I. 1978. *Istoricheskaja grammatika russkogo jazyka. Sintaksis. Prostoje predloženie*. Moskva: Izdatel'stvo Nauka.
- Bricyn, V.M. 1990. *Sintaksis i semantika infinitiva v sovremennom russkom jazyke*. Kiev: Naukova Dumka.
- Bulygina, T.V. 1982. K postroeniju tipologii predikatov v russkom jazyke. In: Seliverstova, O.N. (ed.) *Semanticheskie tipy predikatov*, 14–21. Moskva: Izdatel'stvo Nauka.
- Bulygina, T.V. & Shmelev, A.D. *Jazykovaja konceptualizacija mira (na materiale russkoj grammatiki)*. Moskva: Shkola 'Jazyki Russkoj kul'tury'.
- Buslaev, F.I. 1959. *Istoricheskaja grammatika*. Moskva: Gosudarstvennoe Uchebno-pedagogicheskoe Izdatel'stvo Ministerstva Prosveshchenija RSFSR.
- Bybee, J. & Fleischman, S. 1995. *Modality in grammar and discourse*. Amsterdam/ Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Bybee, J. & Pagliuca, W. 1985. Cross-linguistic comparison and the development of grammatical meaning. In: Fisiak, J. (ed.) *Historical semantics: Historical word-formation*, 59–83. Berlin, etc.: Mouton.
- Cejtlin, S.N. 1980. Sposoby vyrazhenija psicheskogo sostojanija sub'ekta v russkom jazyke. In: *Russkij Jazyk za Rubezhom* 2, 84–87.
- Chagisheva, V.I. 1971. Istorija vtorogo datel'nogo sushchestvitel'nogo v russkom jazyke (XI–XVI vv). In: Bogorodskij, B.L. et al. (eds) *Grammatika i leksika russkogo jazyka*, 210–232. Leningrad: Pedagogicheskij Institut Gercena.

- Chvany, V.C. 1975. *On the syntax of BE-sentences in Russian*. Cambridge, MA: Slavica.
- Comrie, B. 1974. The second dative: A transformational approach. In: Brecht, R. & Chvany, C. (eds) *Slavic transformational syntax*, 123–150. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan.
- Coseriu, E. 1966. 'Tomo y me voy': Ein Problem vergleichender europäischer Syntax. In: *Vox Romanica* 25, 13–55.
- Damerow, P. 1996. *Abstraction and representation: Essays on the cultural evolution of thinking*. Dordrecht, etc. : Kluwer.
- Dancygier, B. & Sweetser, E. 1996. Conditionals, distancing, and alternative spaces. In: Goldberg, A. (ed.) *Conceptual structure, discourse and language*, 83–98. Stanford, CA: CSLI Publications.
- Dik, S.C. 1989. *The theory of functional grammar, part I: The structure of the clause*. Dordrecht: Foris.
- Dippong, H. 1995. Zum Subjekt von Imperativsätzen. In: Dippong, H. (ed.) *Linguistische Beiträge zur Slavistik aus Deutschland, Österreich und der Schweiz*, 47–61. München: Otto Sagner.
- Donhauser, K. 1986. *Der Imperativ im Deutschen*. Hamburg: Helmut Buske.
- Ebeling, C.L. 1956. On the verbal predicate in Russian. In: Halle, M. (ed.) *For Roman Jakobson: Essays on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday*, 86–88. The Hague: Mouton & Co.
- Ebeling, C.L. 1978. *Syntax and semantics: A taxonomic approach*. Leiden: Brill.
- Ebeling, C.L. 1984. On the meaning of the Russian infinitive. In: Van Baak, J.J. (ed.) *Signs of friendship*, 97–130. Amsterdam: Rodopi.
- Ekberg, L. 1993. The cognitive basis of the meaning and function of cross-linguistic *take and V*. In: *Belgian Journal of Linguistics* 8, 23–42.
- Fauconnier, G. & Sweetser, E. 1996. *Spaces worlds and grammar*. Chicago/ London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Fillmore, C. 1968. The case for case. In: Bach, E. and Harms, R.T. (eds) *Universals in linguistic theory*, 1–88. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Fodor, J. 1976. *The language of thought*. Hassocks: The Harvester Press.
- Foolen, A. 1993. *De betekenis van partikels*. Doctoral dissertation, University of Nijmegen.
- Formanovskaja, N.I. 1989. *Slozhnoe predloženie*. Moskva: Russkij Jazyk.
- Forsyth, J. 1970. *A grammar of aspect*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Franks, S. 1990. Case, configuration, and argumenthood: Reflections on the second dative. In: *Russian Linguistics* 14, 231–254.
- García, E. 1975. *The role of theory in linguistic analysis: The Spanish pronoun system*. Amsterdam/ Oxford: North-Holland.

- Garde, P. 1963. *L'emploi du conditionnel et de la particule by en russe*. Aix-en-Provence: Editions Ophrys.
- Giannakidou, A. 1997. *The landscape of polarity items*. Groningen Dissertations in Linguistics 18. Groningen: Grodil.
- Ginsburg, H.P. & Opper, S. 1988. *Piaget's theory of intellectual development*. Third edition. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Givón, T. 1979. *On understanding grammar*. New York: Academic Press.
- Givón, T. 1984. *Syntax: A functional-typological introduction*, Vol. 1. Amsterdam/ Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Givón, T. 1995. *Functionalism and grammar*. Amsterdam/ Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Goddard, C. 1998. Bad arguments against semantic primitives. In: *Theoretical Linguistics* 24(2/3), 129–156.
- Goldberg, A.E. 1995. *Constructions. A construction approach to argument structure*. Chicago/ London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Haiman, J. 1985. *Natural syntax: Iconicity and erosion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hansen, B. 1998. Modalauxiliare in den slavischen Sprachen. In: *Zeitschrift für Slavistik* 43, 3, 249–374.
- Haverkate, W.H. 1979. *Impositive sentences in Spanish*. Amsterdam: North-Holland.
- Hinrichs, U. 1983. *Die sogenannten 'Vvodnye Slova' (Schalwörter/Modalwörter) im Russischen*. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz.
- Isachenko, A.V. 1957. K voprosu ob imperative v russkom jazyke. In: *Russkij Jazyk v Škole* 6, 7–11.
- Isachenko, A.V. 1960. *Grammaticeskij stroj russkogo jazyka v sopostavlenii s slovackim: Morfologija, chast' vtoraja*. Bratislava: Slovackoj Akademii Nauk.
- Isachenko, A.V. 1982. *Die russische Sprache der Gegenwart: Formenlehre*. Fourth edition. München: s.n.
- Issatchenko, A.V. 1983. Geschichte der russischen Sprache, Vol. 2. Birnbaum, H. et al. (eds). Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag.
- Jakobson, R. 1960. Der Doppelcharakter der Sprache: Die Polarität zwischen Metaphorik und Metonymik. In: Ihwe, J. (ed.) *Literaturwissenschaft und Linguistik*, Vol. 1: *Grundlagen und Voraussetzungen*, 323–333. Frankfurt: Athenäum.
- Jakobson, R. 1971. Morfologičeskie nabljudenija nad slavjanskim sklonenijem (sostav russkix padežnyx form). In: *Selected writings*, Vol. 2, *Word and language*, 154–183. Moscow, etc.: Mouton.
- Jakobson, R. 1995 [1936]. Contribution to the general theory of case. In: Waugh, L.R. and

- Monville-Burston, M. (eds), *On language*, 332–385. Cambridge, MA/ London: Harvard University Press.
- Jarceva, V.N. 1990. *Linguističeskij ènciklopedičeskij slovar'*. Moskva: Sovetskaja Ènciklopedija.
- Jurovskij, V. 1996. *Bessjozuznye slozbnje predložbenija v direktivnyx rečevyx aktax*. Bern: Lang.
- Junghanns, U. 1994. *Syntaktische und semantische Eigenschaften Russischer finaler Infinitivseinbetungen*. Slavistische Beiträge 315. München: Otto Sagner.
- Karcevski, S. 1927. *Système du verbe Russe*. Prague: Legiografie.
- Keenan, E.L. 1976. Towards a universal definition of 'subject'. In: Li, C. (ed.) *Subject and topic*, 305–333. New York: Academic Press.
- Keijsper, C.E. 1985. *Information structure*. Amsterdam: Rodopi.
- Keijsper, C.E. 1994. From accent to transitivity. In: *Dutch contributions to the Eleventh International Congress of Slavists, Bratislava* (Studies in Slavic and General Linguistics 22), 193–329. Amsterdam: Rodopi.
- Kiparsky, V. 1963. *Russische historische Grammatik*. Heidelberg: Winter.
- Kogtaj, I. 1968. *K voprosu ob invariantnom znachenii form russkogo imperativa*. In: Ruzhichka, J. (ed.) *Recueil linguistique de Bratislava*, 159–167. Bratislava: Vydavatel'stvo Slovenskej Akadémie Vied.
- Komar, E.S. 1999. Dative subject in Russian revisited: Are all datives created equal? In: Dziwirek, K. et al. (eds.), *Annual Workshop on Formal Approaches to Slavic Linguistics: The Seattle Meeting 1998*, 245–264. Ann Arbor, MI: Michigan Slavic Publications.
- Kompeer, K. 1992. A note on word order and its meaning: SPIT BÁBUSHKA versus BÁBUSHKA SPIT. In: *Studies in Russian Linguistics*, 215–225.
- Kondrashova, N. 1994. Agreement and dative subjects in Russian. In: Avrutin, S. et al. (eds) *Annual Workshop on Formal Approaches to Slavic Linguistics: The MIT Meeting 1993*, 255–285. Ann Arbor, MI: Michigan Slavic Publications.
- Kovtunova, I.I. & Shvedova, N.Ju. 1986. *Poètičeskij sintaksis*. Moskva: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, Institut Russkogo Jazyka.
- Lakoff, G. 1990 [1987]. *Women, fire and dangerous things. What categories reveal about the mind*. Chicago/ London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Lakoff, G. & Johnson, M. 1980. *Metaphors we live by*. Chicago/ London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Lakoff, G. & Johnson, M. 1999. *Philosophy in the flesh: The embodied mind and its challenge to western thought*. New York: Basic Books.
- Langacker, R.W. 1991a. *Foundations of Cognitive Grammar*, Vol. 2. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Langacker, R.W. 1991b. *Concept, image, and symbol: The cognitive basis of grammar*. Berlin/ New

**Comment [d1]:** Krylova, O.A., and Xavronina, S.A. 1984. *Porjadok Sloz v Russkom Jazyke*. Moskva: Russkij Jazyk.

- York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Langacker, R.W. 1999. Indeterminacy in semantics and grammar. In: Cifuentes Honrubia, J.L. (ed.) *Estudios de lingüística cognitiva*, Vol. 2, 649–672. Alicante: Universidad de Alicante.
- Leech, G. 1989. *The principles of pragmatics*. London/ New York: Longman.
- Levinson, S.C. 1983. *Pragmatics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Levontina, I.B. Slovar'nye stat'i chasticy -KA i sushchestvitel'nogo mesjac. In: *Semiotika i informatika* 32, 136–140.
- Lubensky, S. 1995. *Russian-English dictionary of idioms*. New York: Random House.
- Matsumoto, Y. 1996. Subjective-change expressions in Japanese and their cognitive and linguistic bases. In: Fauconnier, G. and Sweetser, E. (eds) *Spaces, worlds and grammar*, 124–156. Chicago/ London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Maurice, F. 1995. Zur Verteilung von Möglichkeit und Notwendigkeit im russischen modalen Infinitiv. In: Dippong, H. (ed.) *Linguistische Beiträge zur Slavistik*, 147–158. München: Otto Sagner.
- Maurice, F. 1996. *Der modale Infinitiv in der modernen russischen Standardsprache*. München: Otto Sagner.
- Mazon, A. 1914. *Emplois des aspects du verbe russe*. Doctoral dissertation, Faculté des lettres, University of Paris.
- Mets, N.A. 1985. *Praktičeskaja grammatika russkogo jazyka*. Moskva: Russkij Jazyk.
- Model, J. 1991. *Grammatische analyse*. Dordrecht: Foris.
- Muravickaja, M.P. 1973. Polisemija imperativa. In: *Matematičeskaja lingvistika*, Vol. 1, 50–60. Kiev: Izdatel'stvo Kievskogo Universiteta.
- Murav'eva, L.S. 1984. O leksičeskoj sočetaemosti glagolov dvizenija. In: *Russkij Jazyk za Rubezhom* 1, 66–71.
- Neidle, C. 1982. Case agreement in Russian. In: Bresnan, J. (ed.) *The mental representation of grammatical relations*, 391–426. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Neidle, C. 1988. *The role of case in Russian syntax*. Dordrecht, etc.: Kluwer.
- Nikiforov, S.D. 1952. *Glagol – ego kategorii i formy v russkom pis'mennosti vtoroj poloviny XVI veka*. Moskva: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR.
- Osipova, L.E. 1992. *Otnositel'nye konstrukcii s chasticej ni v sovremennom russkom jazyke*. Tver': Tverskij Gosudarstvennyj Universitet.
- Paduceva, E.V. 1996. *Semantičeskoe issledovanija: Semantika vremeni i vida v russkom jazyke; semantika narrativa*. Moskva: Shkola 'Jazyki russkoj kul'tury'.
- Palmer, F.R. 1981. *Semantics*. Cambridge: University Press.
- Palva, H. 1977. The descriptive imperative of narrative style in Spoken Arabic. In: *Folia*

**Comment [d2]:** Palmer, F.R. 1990–1979. *Modality and the english modals*. London and New York: Longman

- Orientalia* 18, 5–26.
- Palva, H. 1984. Further notes on the descriptive imperative of narrative style in Spoken Arabic. In: *Studia Orientalia edited by the Finnish Oriental Society* 55, 379–391.
- Percov, N.V. 1998. K probleme invarianta grammaticheskogo znachenija II: Imperativ v russkom jazyke. In: *Voprosy Jazykoznanija* 2, 88–101.
- Peshkovskij, A.M. 1956. *Russkij sintaksis v nauchnom osvješčenii*. Moskva: Učpedgiz.
- Proeme, H. 1991. Over de Nederlandse imperativus. In: *Studies over bet Poolse, Nederlandse en Russische werkwoord*, 32–53. Leiden: Vakgroep Slavische Taal- en Letterkunde Rijksuniversiteit Leiden.
- Proeme, H. *forthcoming*. In: Houtzagers, P. (ed.) *Handboek Russische grammatica*. Bussum: Coutinho.
- Prokopovich, E.N. 1969. *Stilistika chastej reči*. Moskva: Prosveshchenie.
- Rappaport, G.C. 1985. Aspect and modality in the context of negation. In: Flier S. & Timberlake, A. (eds) *The scope of Slavic aspect*, 194–223. Columbus, OH: Slavica.
- Rosch, E. 1973. On the internal structure of perceptual and semantic categories. In: Moore, T. (ed.) *Cognitive development and the acquisition of language*, 111–144. New York: Academic Press.
- Rosch, E. 1978. Principles of categorization. In: Rosch, E. & Lloyd, B. (eds) *Cognition and categorization*, 27–48. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Rubinstein, G. 1986. Subjective dative in Russian infinitival clauses of purpose. In: *Slavic and East European Journal* 30(3), 367–379.
- Russkaja Grammatika*, 1980. Shvedova, N.Ju. (ed.), Vols 1–2. Moskva: Izdatel'stvo Nauka.
- Rûzichka, R. 1994. Asymmetry and parallelism between affirmative and negative (*ne*) (*est'*) *gde spat'*. In: *Russian Linguistics* 18(1), 53–72.
- Sanders, J. & Redeker, G. 1996. Perspective and the representation of speech and thought in narrative discourse. In: Fauconnier, G. & Sweetser, E. (eds) *Spaces, worlds and grammar*, 290–317. Chicago/ London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Sandra, D. & Rice, S. 1995. Network analyses of prepositional meanings: Mirroring whose mind – the linguist's or the language user's? In: *Cognitive Linguistics* 6(1), 89–130.
- Scholz, F. 1973. *Russian impersonal expressions used with reference to a person*. The Hague/ Paris: Mouton.
- Schoorlemmer, M. 1994. Dative subjects in Russian. In: J. Toman (ed.) *Annual Workshop on Formal Approaches to Slavic Linguistics: The Ann Arbor Meeting: Functional categories in Slavic syntax*, 400–422. Ann Arbor, MI: Michigan Slavic Publications.
- Schoorlemmer, M. 1995. *Participial passive and aspect in Russian*. Utrecht: OTS.
- Searle, J. 1975. A classification of Illocutionary Acts. In: *Language and Society* 5, 1–23.

- Searle, J. 1991 [1983]. *Intentionality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Searle, J. 1979. Metaphor. In: Ortony, A. (ed.) *Metaphor and thought*, 92–123. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Shatunovskij, I.B. 1996. *Semantika predložhenija i nereferentnye slova*. Moskva: Shkola 'Jazyki russkoj kul'tury'.
- Sheljakin, M.A. 1986. *Russkije mestoimenija*. Tartu: Tartuskij Gosudarstvennyj Universitet.
- Shmelëv, D.N. 1961. Vneimperativnoe upotreblenie formy povelitel'nogo naklonenija v sovremennom russkom jazyke. In: *Russkij Jazyk v Škole* 5, 50–55.
- Shvedova, N. Ju. 1955. Nekotorye vidy znachenij skazuemogo v sovremennom russkom jazyke. In: Pospelov, N.S. & Svedova, N.Ju. (eds) *Issledovanija po grammatike russkogo literaturnogo jazyka*, 247–341. Moskva: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR.
- Shvedova, N.Ju. 1967. Paradigmatika prostogo predložhenija v sovremennom russkom jazyke. In: *Russkij jazyk: Grammatičeskie Issledovanija*, 3–77. Moskva: Izdatel'stvo Nauka.
- Shvedova, N.Ju. 1974. O dolženstvovatel'nom naklonenii. In: Zolotova, G.A. (ed.) *Sintaksis i norma*, 107–121. Moskva: Izdatel'stvo Nauka.
- Siewierska, A. 1988. *Word order rules*. New York: Croom Helm.
- Signorini, S. 1993. Infinitivnye predložhenija v russkom jazyke Rossii pervoj poloviny XVII veka. In: Fici Giusti, F. & Signorini, S. (eds) *Kategorija skazuemogo v slavjanskix jazykax: Modal'nost' i aktualizacija*, 195–207. München: Otto Sagner.
- Sirotinina, O.V. 1965. *Porjadok slov v russkom jazyke*. Saratov: Izdatel'stvo Saratovskogo Universiteta.
- Smith, M.B. 1994. Agreement and iconicity in Russian impersonal constructions. In: *Cognitive Linguistics* 5, 5–56.
- Slovar' Russkogo Jazyka*, 1981–1984. Evgen'evoj, A.P. (ed.), Vols. 1–4. Moskva: Izdatel'stvo Nauka.
- Sobolevskij, A.I. 1962 [1907]. *Lekcii po istorii russkago jazyka*. 's-Gravenhage: Mouton & Co.
- Steedman, J.M. 1977. Verb, time and modality. In: *Cognitive Science* 1, 216–234.
- Stender-Peterson, A. 1930. *O perezhitočnyx sledax aorista v slavjanskix jazykax, preimuchestvenno v russkom*. Acta Commentationes Universitatis Tartuensis, Humaniora 18.
- Sweetser, E. 1990. *From etymology to pragmatics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sweetser, E. 1996. Mental spaces and the grammar of conditional constructions. In: Fauconnier, G. and Sweetser, E. (eds) *Spaces, world and grammar*, 318–333. Chicago/London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Talmy, L. 1985. Force dynamics in language and thought. In: *Papers from the Parasession on*

- Causatives and Agentivity*, 293–337. Chicago: Chicago Linguistic Society.
- Tarlanov, Z.K. 1982. *Očerki po sintaksisu russkix poslovič*. Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Leningradskogo Universiteta.
- Timofeev, K.A. 1950. Ob osnovnyx tipax infinitivnyx predloženij v sovremennom russkom literaturnom jazyke. In: Vinogradov, V.V. (ed.) *Voprosy sintaksisa sovremennogo russkogo jazyka*, 257–301. Moskva: Gosudarstvennoe Uchebno-Pedagogičeskoe Izdatel'stvo.
- Van der Auwera J. & Plungian, V. 1998. On modality's semantic map. In: *Linguistic Typology* 2, 79–124.
- Van der Wouden, T. 1994. *Negative contexts*. Groningen Dissertations in Linguistics 12. Groningen: Grodil.
- Vasil'eva, A.N. 1969. Glagol v razgovornoj reči. In: *Russkij Jazyk za Rubežhom*, 39–44.
- Vasilyeva, A.N. 1972. *Particles in colloquial Russian*. Moscow: Progress.
- Vaulina, S.S. 1988. *Èvolucija sredstv vyražbenija modal'nosti v russkom jazyke*. Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Leningradskogo Universiteta.
- Velichko, A.V. 1996. *Sintaktičeskaja frazeologija*. Moskva: Filologičeskij Fakul'tet MGU.
- Verhagen, A. 1986. *Linguistic theory and the function of word order in Dutch*. Doctoral dissertation, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.
- Veyrenc, J. 1979. *Les propositions infinitives en russe*. Paris: Bibliothèque Russe.
- Veyrenc, J. 1980. *Études sur le verbe russe*. Paris: Institut d'Études Slaves.
- Veyrenc, J. 1983. Le verbe 'être' en russe moderne. In: *IIIe Colloque de Linguistique Russe*, 211–222. Aix-en-Provence: Institut d'Études Slaves.
- Vinogradov, V.V. 1947. *Russkij jazyk*. Moskva: Učpedgiz.
- Vinogradov, V.V. 1952. (ed.) *Grammatika russkogo jazyka*, Vol. I. Moskva: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR.
- Vinogradov, V.V. & Shvedova, I.Ju. 1964a. *Očerki po istoričeskoj grammatike Russkogo literaturnogo jazyka XIX veka: Izmenenija v sisteme prostogo i složnennogo predložbenija*. Moskva: Izdatel'stvo Nauka.
- Vinogradov, V.V. & Shvedova, I.Ju. 1964b. *Očerki po istoričeskoj grammatike Russkogo literaturnogo jazyka XIX veka: Izmenenija v stroe složnopodčinennogo predložbenija*. Moskva: Izdatel'stvo Nauka.
- Vinogradov, V.V. & Shvedova, I.Ju. 1964c. *Očerki po istoričeskoj grammatike Russkogo literaturnogo jazyka XIX veka: Izmenenija v sisteme slovosocetanij*. Moskva: Izdatel'stvo Nauka.
- Vygotsky, L. 1986. *Thought and language*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Wade, T. 1992. *A comprehensive Russian grammar*. Oxford/ Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.
- Wetzer, H. 1995. *Nouniness and verbiness*. Doctoral dissertation, Nijmegen University.

- Wierzbicka, A. 1966. Slavjanskij dativus cum infinitivus. In: *International Journal of Slavic Linguistics and Poetics* 10, 82–102.
- Wierzbicka, A. 1978. Syntax vs. semantics. In: *Theoretical Linguistics* 5, 115–133.
- Wierzbicka, A. 1986. The meaning of a case: A study of the Polish dative. In: Brecht, R.D. & Levine, J.S. (eds) *Case in Slavic*, 386–426. Columbus, OH: Slavica.
- Wierzbicka, A. 1987. The semantics of modality. In: *Folia Linguistica* 21(1), 25–43.
- Wierzbicka, A. 1996. *Semantics. Primes and universals*. Oxford/ New York: Oxford University Press.
- Wittgenstein, L. 1984. *Traktatus logico-philosophicus. Werkausgabe Band 1. Tagebücher 1914–1916. Philosophische Untersuchungen*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.
- Xalizeva, V.S. 1969. Semanticheskij analiz sojuzov predshestvovanija. In: *Russkij Jazyk za Rubežhom* 2, 77–82.
- Xrakovskij, V.S. 1988. Imperativnye formy NSV i SV v russkom jazyke i ix upotreblenie. In: *Russian Linguistics* 12(3), 269–292.
- Xrakovskij, V.S. & Volodin, A.P. 1986. *Semantika i tipologija imperativa*. Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Nauka.
- Yokoyama, O.T. 1986. *Discourse and word order*. Amsterdam/ Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Zaefferer, D. 1991. *Semantic universals and universal semantics*. Berlin/ New York: Foris.
- Zaichkova, I. 1972. *Datel'nyj bespredložnyj v sovremennom russkom literaturnom jazyke*. Praha: Universita Karlova.
- Zaitseva, V. 1990. Conditions for the presence of the dative NP in Russian impersonal constructions. In: *Harvard Studies of Linguistics* 1, 215–229.
- Zolotova, G.A. 1982. *Kommunikativnye aspekty russkogo sintaksisa*. Moskva: Izdatel'stvo Nauka.

---

## Text sources

The Russian examples (extracts) in this dissertation are from (i) the corpus of A. Barentsen, Department of Slavic Linguistics, University of Amsterdam, (ii) Internet, (iii) native speakers of Russian, and (iv) the following literary texts:

- Amal'rik, A. 1970 *P'esy*. Amsterdam: Fond imeni Gercena.
- Babel', I. 1989. *Konarmija*. Murmansk: Murmanskoe Knizhnoe Izdatel'stvo.
- Chexov, A.P. 1988. *Sredi mylix: moskvičej*. Moskva: Pravda.
- Erofeev, V. 1993. *Izbrannye rasskazy, povesti*. Moskva, etc.: Tret'ja Volna.
- Gogol', N.V. 1976. *Sobranie sočinenij*. Moskva: Xudozhestvennaja Literatura.
- Leskov, N.S. 1979. *Izbrannye sočinenija*. Moskva: Xudozhestvennaja Literatura.
- Majakovskij, V.V. 1987. *Sočinenija v dvux tomax*. Vol. 1. Moskva: Pravda.
- Paustovskij, K. 1985. *Nachalo nevedomogo veka. Vremja bol'shix ožhidanj*. Kiev: Izdatel'stvo Xudozhestvennoj Literatury Dnipro.
- Pil'njak, B. 1990. *Čelovečeskij veter. Romany. Povesti. Rasskazy*. Chubinashvili: Ganatleba.
- The Penguin book of Russian verse*. 1962. Obolensky, D. (ed.). Middlesex: Penguin Books.
- Xarms, D. 1991. *Polet v nebesa*. Leningrad: Sovetskij Pisatel'.
- Zoshchenko, M. 1935 *Izbrannye rasskazy*. Leningrad: Xudozhestvennaja Literatura.

---

## Samenvatting

In de literatuur is een lange discussie gaande over de vraag of vormen in beginsel *monoseem* zijn, dat wil zeggen één abstracte betekenis hebben, of dat zulke abstracties principiële te weinig specifiek zijn. Volgens de laatste opvatting zijn betekenissen in essentie *polyseem*, dat wil zeggen vormen zijn geassocieerd met verschillende aan elkaar gerelateerde betekenissen. Veel onderzoeken die zich met deze vraag bezighouden, zijn sterk theoretisch van aard en ondersteunen hun empirische claims niet met diepgravende analyses van talige data. De nadruk op het theoretische aspect leidt, in sommige gevallen, tot bepaalde tekortkomingen. Monoseme analyses laten het proces van interpretatie van betekenissen vaak onverklaard en in veel gevallen zijn de betekenisdefinities zo abstract dat ze ook de betekenis van oppositionele vormen beschrijven. In polyseme analyses is het vaak onduidelijk wat precies de criteria zijn om verschillende betekenissen te onderscheiden en in veel gevallen is de status van grensgevallen onduidelijk. Bovendien wordt in polyseme analyses vaak nagelaten om te wijzen op de gedeelde kenmerken van verschillende gebruiksgevallen van één vorm die in oppositie met andere vormen kunnen staan.

In deze dissertatie probeer ik meer inzicht te verschaffen in het fenomeen van polysemie dan wel monosemie door een gedetailleerde analyse te geven van de wisselwerking tussen betekenis en context tegen de achtergrond van het betekenissysteem waarin de bestudeerde vormen optreden. De onderzochte vormen zijn de imperatief en de datief-infinitiefconstructie in het moderne Russisch. Het voornaamste doel van deze analyses is de verschillende gebruiksgevallen van deze vormen/ constructies te verklaren.

In hoofdstuk I geef ik een korte inleiding tot de dissertatie. Alvorens de genoemde vormen te onderzoeken bespreek ik in hoofdstuk II de structuur van betekenis door te kijken hoe betekenissen of concepten worden geleerd en hoe ze functioneren in het talige systeem. In navolging van Bartsch (1999) stel ik dat vormen in een stabiele talige

## Samenvatting

structuur noodzakelijk met meerdere betekenissen geassocieerd zijn. Dit is echter alleen mogelijk als de taalgebruiker een onderscheid kan maken tussen zulke verschillende gebruiksgevallen door middel van verschillende *perspectieven*. Hierbij is het van belang dat concepten niet vanuit een te algemeen perspectief worden bekeken en dat het gebruik van een talige uiting afgebakend wordt door oppositionele vormen.

Ik wijs er verder op dat het tevens mogelijk is op verschillende niveaus te abstraheren van verschillende gebruiksgevallen en zo een algemene betekenis te definiëren. De algemene betekenis kan het best gezien worden als een *raamwerk* waarbinnen verschillende gebruiksgevallen van een uiting onderscheiden kunnen worden. Zo'n raamwerk is geen definitie die voorspelt welke gebruiksgevallen mogelijk zijn en welke niet, maar moet eerder gezien worden als een omschrijving van de gedeelde kenmerken van een vorm of constructie die in oppositie kunnen staan met andere vormen. De notie 'raamwerk' duidt op twee dingen, namelijk: (i) het kan gezien worden als een beperking op het gebruik van een bepaalde vorm, anders gezegd, een beperking op de betekenisafleidingen van een bepaalde vorm, en (ii) binnen het raamwerk kunnen verschillende gebruiksgevallen worden onderscheiden. Ik beweer verder dat het niet mogelijk is om een volledig eenduidig antwoord te geven op de vraag *wanneer* gebruiksgevallen van een vorm als verschillend kunnen worden gezien; dat komt doordat er geen duidelijke en discrete criteria zijn voor een dergelijke classificatie.

Het grootste gedeelte van de dissertatie bestaat uit een gedetailleerde analyse van de Russische imperatief en de Russische datief-infinitiefconstructie. In hoofdstuk III, bespreek ik de betekenis van de Russische imperatief. Ik geef een basisbetekenis van de imperatief die gezien moet worden als een abstractie van de zogenaamde 'directieve' en 'horatieve' gebruiksgevallen. Deze gebruiksgevallen hebben op hun beurt weer basisgevallen en afleidingen van deze gevallen door middel van selectie, en mogelijk cancelling van kenmerken onder perspectieven. Het proces van uitbreiding door kenmerkselectie treedt op in verschillende gradaties—corresponderend met het aantal geselecteerde kenmerken—zodat sommige gevallen gezien kunnen worden als grensgevallen tussen de verschillende *gebruikstypen*. Deze gebruikstypen corresponderen met *contexttypen*. Contexttypen worden gevormd door verzamelingen van formele kenmerken die corresponderen met duidelijke semantische typen.

Hoewel het niet mogelijk is om een noodzakelijke en voldoende voorwaarde voor het correcte gebruik van de imperatief te geven, kan men wel abstraheren van de verschillende gevallen en wijzen op gedeelde kenmerken die niet optreden bij oppositionele vormen. De benadering die ik voorsta in de bestudering van de imperatief houdt het midden tussen een monoseme en een polyseme benadering. Het

heeft de overeenkomst met de monoseme benadering dat bepaalde kenmerken (bijvoorbeeld 'directiviteit') gezien kunnen worden als een noodzakelijke voorwaarde voor het correcte begrip (eerder dan correcte gebruik) van de imperatief. Het deelt met de polyseme benaderingen dat verschillende gebruiksgevallen een min of meer onafhankelijke status hebben en dat verschillende gebruiksgevallen geanalyseerd kunnen worden in termen van afleidingen van andere gebruiksgevallen.

In hoofdstuk IV bespreek ik de datief-infinitiefconstructie. Ik laat zien hoe de verschillende modale gebruiksgevallen afgeleid kunnen worden van de betekenissen van de componenten in de constructie en hoe de distributie van de constructie verklaard kan worden door te wijzen op de betekenis van de constructie. Ik beweer dat het toewijzen van de datief aan het infinitiefpredikaat altijd gerelateerd is aan de *ontisch-modale* betekenis van de constructie, hetgeen betekent dat het optreden van de infinitiefsituatie door de datiefparticipant voorgesteld wordt als iets wat ligt in de normale of onvermijdelijke loop der dingen, en wat niet het resultaat is van de wil of intentie van de datiefparticipant. Meer in het bijzonder beweer ik dat het idee van 'recipiëns van een situatie/handeling' te maken heeft met een informatieuitgangssituatie waarin de datiefparticipant *niet* geassocieerd is met de infinitiefsituatie (of in het geval van negatie, *wel* geassocieerd wordt met deze situatie), die dan impliciet tegengesproken wordt.

Ik stel verder dat het verbale of predikatieve element van de constructie niet gezien kan worden als een betekenis, maar als een interpretatie die het gevolg is van de associatie van de niet-uitgedrukte infinitief-agens met het datiefsubject. Het is daarom fout om modaal-logische operatoren, of modale niet onderliggende vormen voor de constructie te poneren.

In mijn analyse wijs ik verder op de gedeelde kenmerken van de eigenlijke datief-infinitiefconstructie (met zelfstandige naamwoorden of voornaamwoorden), en het optreden van de zogenaamde tweede datief. Ik beweer dat de tweede datief geanalyseerd kan worden als een speciaal soort datief-infinitiefconstructie; een dergelijke benadering maakt het mogelijk om de distributie van de tweede datief adequaat te verklaren. Deze analyse biedt een dieper niveau van verklaring dan analyses die betekenis niet meenemen in de syntactische analyse (zoals analyses in de Generatieve Grammatika of in het model van Lexical Functional Grammar). Ik laat zien dat deze modellen gekarakteriseerd worden door de volgende tekortkomingen: (i) niet gemotiveerde regels worden gepostuleerd om talige fenomenen te verklaren, (ii) theoretische noties die dienen ter verklaring, zijn dit in feite niet, omdat ze gedeeltelijk zelf gedefiniëerd worden in termen van de fenomenen die ze beogen te beschrijven en

### *Samenvatting*

verklaren, (iii) talige fenomenen die vormelijk met elkaar samenhangen, worden op een arbitraire wijze van elkaar gescheiden, en (iv) in sommige gevallen worden de verkeerde voorspellingen gedaan.

In hoofdstuk V, ten slotte, geef ik een algemene conclusie en doe ik enkele suggesties voor verder onderzoek.

---

## Abstract

In the literature there has been much debate concerning the question of whether forms are essentially *monosemous*, that is, associated with *one* abstract meaning, or whether such abstractions are principally underspecified; according to the latter approach, meanings are essentially *polysemous*, that is, forms are associated with different interrelated meanings. Many studies that deal with this problem are highly theoretical, and do not support their empirical claims with extensive analyses of specific empirical data. The focus on the theoretical aspect of the phenomenon of meaning leads, in some cases, to particular shortcomings. Monosemous approaches frequently leave the process of interpretation of abstract meanings unexplained, and in many cases definitions of meanings are so abstract that they also describe oppositional forms. In polysemous analyses, however, the criteria for distinguishing different uses are not always clear, and intermediate uses are often not accounted for. Moreover, polysemous analyses often fail to point at the shared features of different interrelated uses, which may stand in opposition to other forms.

In this dissertation I provide further insight into the phenomenon of polysemy versus monosemy by giving a detailed analysis of the interaction between meaning and context against the background of the semantic system in which the forms occur. The expressions that I analyze are the imperative and the dative-infinitive (DI) construction in modern Russian. The main aim of these analyses is to account for the different uses of these forms/ constructions.

In Chapter I, I give a short introduction to the dissertation. Before analyzing the forms under discussion, in Chapter II I explain the structure of meaning by discussing how meanings are learned, and how they function in the linguistic structure. Following Bartsch (1999), I argue that in order for the linguistic structure to be stable, it is necessary that forms are associated with different concepts; however, this is only possible if different perspectives enable the language user to differentiate between

## *Abstract*

them. It is also important that concepts are not overextended under a perspective, and that the use of an expression is delineated by oppositional forms. I further argue that although forms are associated with different uses, it is possible in many cases to abstract from these different uses on different levels, and to define a general meaning. The general meaning can best be seen as a *frame* within which the different uses of an expression may occur. Such a frame cannot be seen as a definition in the strict sense, as it does not predict the possible uses of a word, but rather describes the common features of a word, which may stand in opposition to other uses. The notion of 'frame' points to two things: (i) the frame can be seen as a *restriction* on the use of a particular form, or put differently, a restriction on the extensions of a particular form, securing stability of the linguistic system; and (ii) it is within the possibilities provided by the frame that *different uses can be distinguished*. I also argue that it is not possible to give an adequate answer the question of *when* uses of a form can be seen as different since there are no clear and discrete criteria for distinguishing different uses.

The main part of the dissertation consists of a detailed analysis of the Russian imperative and the Russian dative-infinitive construction. In Chapter III, I discuss the meaning and use of the Russian imperative. I define a basic meaning of the imperative that can be seen as an abstraction from so-called 'directive' uses and 'hortative' uses. These uses have basic uses themselves, and extensions from these basic uses by the process of selection, and possibly cancelling of features under perspectives provided by contexts. The process of extension by feature selection (backgrounding, highlighting, cancelling) occurs in different degrees (corresponding to the number of selected features), such that some instances of the imperative can be seen as borderline cases between different uses. The different uses should therefore be seen as *usage types*. These usage types correspond to *context types*. Context types are constituted by collections of formal features that correspond to clear examples of different semantic types.

Although it is not possible to give a necessary and sufficient definition for all the uses of the imperative it is possible to abstract from the uses on different levels, and point at shared features of the different imperative uses, that do not occur with oppositional forms. The approach to the study of the imperative that I advocate is an intermediate position between monosemous approaches and polysemous approaches. It shares with monosemous approaches the idea that some collection of features (viz. directivity) can be seen as a necessary and sufficient condition for the correct understanding (rather than correct use) of the imperative, and it shares with polysemous approaches the idea that different uses have a more or less independent status, and that can be analyzed in terms of extensions of other uses.

In Chapter IV, I discuss the dative-infinitive construction. I show how the different modal uses of the construction can be derived from its component parts, and how the distribution of the construction can be motivated by its meaning. I argue that the assignment of the dative to the infinitive predicate is always connected to an *ontic* modal meaning, that is, the realization of the infinitive situation by the dative participant is presented as something which is accordance with the normal or inevitable way things go, rather than as the result of the intention of the dative participant. More specifically, I argue that the idea of recipienthood of a situation presupposes an initial information state where the dative participant is *not* associated with the realization of the infinitive situation (or in the case of negation, where the dative participant *is* associated with the infinitive situation), which is then (implicitly) contradicted.

I argue that the verbal or predicative element of the construction cannot be seen as a *meaning*, but must rather be seen as the *interpretation* that is the result of the association between the non-expressed infinitive agent and the dative subject. It is therefore incorrect to posit modal logic operators, or non-expressed modal elements for the construction.

In my analysis I point at the shared features between the dative-infinitive construction proper (with dative nouns or pronouns), and the occurrence of the second dative. I argue that if the second dative is analyzed as a special instance of the DI-construction, it is possible to motivate its distribution. Such an analysis provides a deeper level of understanding than syntactic analysis that do not take meaning into account in a systemantic way (more specifically analyses working within the framework of Generative Grammar, or Lexical Functional Grammar). I will argue that these analyses are characterized by the following shortcomings (i) non-motivated rules are postulated to explain the linguistic phenomenon in question; (ii) model-theoretic notions that are postulated as explanatory devices have in fact no real explanatory value, because they are partly defined in terms of the phenomena they aim to describe and explain, (iii) linguistic phenomena that are formally unified (different occurrences of the dative case) are treated as non-related phenomena, such that arbitrary distinctions between linguistic data are made, and (iv) the models do not adequately explain the occurrence of the second dative, and make the wrong predictions.