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## Additional Information introduced by SJA in Russian

### 1. Introduction

Russian *-sja* and *-s'* (henceforth SJA) are etymological descendents of Late Common Slavic *sę*, which is a short form of the reflexive pronoun *sebe* in the accusative case (Isačenko 1960: 380). SJA is known to express reflexive meaning and verbs with SJA are considered to be reflexive verbs in Russian (Švedova et al. 1980: 617). The reflexive meaning signals that the patient of a given verb is the same entity as the subject, as in the following example.

- (1) a. Mal'čik moeť sebja.  
       boy-N wash-PR-3S self-A  
       The boy is washing himself.
- b. Mal'čik moeťsja  
       boy-N wash-PR-3S-SJA.  
       The boy is washing (himself).

The first example expresses the reflexive meaning, using the reflexive pronoun *sebja* in the accusative case. This meaning can also be expressed using the SJA verb *myť'sja* 'wash', as in example (1b). However, these two sentences are not considered fully synonymous, because each sentence carries its own semantic distinction. The sentence with the reflexive pronoun *sebja*, unlike the sentence with *myť'sja* 'wash', expresses that the subject, who is a boy in the example above, is washing himself, not other people or things. In other words, the sentence with the reflexive pronoun emphasizes the patient, or object, of the verb. The sentence with the SJA verb does not place the emphasis on the patient.

- (2) a. Mal'čik moet ne sobaku, a sebja.  
boy-N wash-PR-3S no dog-A, but self-A  
The boy is washing not a dog, but himself.
- b. \*Mal'čik moet ne sobaku, a moetsja.  
boy-N wash-PR-3S no dog-A, but wash-PR-3S-SJA  
The boy is washing not a dog, but himself.

The meaning of contrastive emphasis on the patient is expressed only by the reflexive pronoun (2a), but the sentence with the SJA verb (2b) does not express this contrastive emphasis.

The SJA verb expresses reflexive meaning, but reflexive meaning is not the only meaning that SJA expresses. The reflexive meaning, from semantic and etymological points of view, is a prototypical meaning expressed by SJA in Russian. In this paper the reflexive meaning is considered a prototype, and the meanings which attract my interest appear as the so-called non-reflexive meanings expressed by SJA verbs or SJA sentences. These meanings of SJA show semantic diversity, and this diversity cannot be explained through the reflexive meaning alone. In this discussion other meanings of SJA sentences are investigated, based on their relationship to the reflexive meaning. The purpose of this research is to show the functions of SJA and to decide which functions are more prototypical and peripheral.

## **2. Reinterpretation of the intransitivity.**

SJA, as mentioned above, expresses reflexive meaning. Reflexive meaning is often explained through the concept of intransitivity. Vinogradov (1947)<sup>1</sup> presents research about the voice phenomena of SJA verbs in Russian. Vinogradov (1947: 630) asserts that the general function of SJA is to eliminate transitivity and to strengthen intransitivity, but the meaning of SJA depends largely upon the lexical meaning of the verb to which the SJA is attached.

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<sup>1</sup> Vinogradov's *Russkij jazyk: grammatičeskoe učenie o slove* (1972) is a revision of Vinogradov's book with the same title in 1947. However, the editors of Vinogradov (1972) – Prokopovič and Belošapkova—state that the text remains unmodified in Vinogradov (1972) in the editors' preface (Vinogradov 1972: 7).

The pagination of the section on SJA is identical in the 1947 and 1972 versions.

The function of signaling intransitivity has been considered the invariant meaning in traditional linguistic research regarding SJA such as Vinogradov (1947) and Isačenko (1960). This invariant meaning is known to be realized in all the instances of SJA uses, however, this meaning of intransitivity has often been explained using the deletion of a participant from the semantically corresponding transitive non-SJA sentence. As you see in the example (1), the patient in the accusative case is deleted in the SJA sentence, and this process can be explained as follows:

The process of deletion

$$S V_{\text{Non-REFL}} O \rightarrow S V_{\text{REFL}}$$

Figure 1. The process of reflexivization.

The deleted participant is a patient of the action of the non-reflexive, transitive verb. The reflexive construction presents a situation wherein the subject performs the action of the verb on the same subject—that is, on itself.

In Cognitive linguistics a polysemous morpheme has a semantic network composed of its meanings. All the meanings occupy unique positions in the semantic network, and all the meanings are interrelated. These meanings are not equal in the semantic network: One or several meanings are the better examples than others of a category, and these meanings of the better examples are called (semantic) prototypes, or prototypical meanings. Such a prototype is different from the invariant meaning in that the peripheral members of a category do not have to share the semantic property or properties of the prototype in themselves., The invariant meaning of a category, however, should share common semantic feature(s) with other members of the non-invariant meanings. There are some peripheral meanings do not share any semantic feature or value with their prototypical meaning. The relationship among the meanings is called Family Resemblance<sup>2</sup> (Lakoff 1987: 42). The meaning of Russian SJA is explained using the concept of prototype and semantic network rather than the invariant here in this paper.

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<sup>2</sup> Family Resemblance explains the idea that members of a category may be related to one another without all members having any properties in common that define category (Lakoff 1987: 12).

While Vinogradov (1947) defines the prototype of the reflexive meaning as signaling intransitivity, it is also necessary to review what other linguists think about the meaning of SJA. First of all, Isačenko follows Vinogradov's definition about the meaning of SJA. Isačenko (1960: 374) asserts that SJA in Russian explicitly expresses the meaning of intransitivity. Švedova et al. (1980) relates the meaning of SJA to the passive and intransitive meanings. These definitions of the general or invariant meaning of SJA explain that SJA is used to show change in the valence of a verb. The number of participants in a situation decreases in the process of attaching SJA, and this process happens in most cases to a transitive verb which has a subject and an object.

The meaning of intransitivity here does not simply refer to a syntactically intransitive construction, as some SJA verbs are derived from already grammatically intransitive verbs such as *belet'sja* 'become white', *svetat'sja* 'dawn' etc.

Some SJA constructions are grammatically intransitive, but semantically transitive. The following example illustrates the passive meaning expressed by a SJA verb in the imperfective aspect. This sentence is grammatically intransitive, but still semantically transitive, as with the corresponding non-SJA sentence:

- (3) Okno moetsja rabočimi.  
window-N wash-PR-3S-SJA workers-I  
The window is washed by workers.

This SJA sentence expresses passive meaning, and the subject is a patient of the verb *myt'sja* 'wash'. The semantic subject or agent is shown in the instrumental case. The semantic correspondence between the active and passive constructions is a semantically rare case, and the relationship between the active and passive constructions will be discussed further on p.6.

More recent research involves different approaches to the meaning of SJA. Gerritsen (1990) explains the meaning of SJA using the action and the participants as starting and terminal points of the action. The role of SJA is defined as the introduction of the generalizing roles Stp 'Starting point' and Tp 'Terminal point'.

Israeli (1997) defines the meaning of SJA according to Kemmer's notion of the meaning of the middle voice as low elaboration of an event (Kemmer 1993). In other

words, a SJA sentence elaborates upon on a situation less than the corresponding non-SJA sentence. SJA sentence (4b) simply denotes a situation where the speaker is involved in the action of washing, while the corresponding non-SJA sentence (4a) elaborates more on the patient of the action of washing, which is the hand of the speaker.

- (4) a. Ja moju ruku.  
 I-N wash-PR-1S hand-A  
 I am washing my hand.
- b. Ja mojus’.  
 I-N wash-PR-1S-SJA  
 I am washing.

The deleted patient of the action causes a semantic change (the meaning shifts to low elaboration of the action), but the reason why the SJA construction elaborates less than non-SJA construction should be considered when determining the meaning of SJA. This reason can show us how the speaker chooses SJA construction instead of non-SJA.

The speaker using the SJA construction wants to communicate the information or the interpretation of a situation more effectively, and this need can be explained through Grice’s Conversational Maxims (Grice 1975)<sup>3</sup>. The maxims of quantity and of manner are relevant in that the speaker wants to transfer the information modified by the speaker himself. The speaker uses the SJA construction to highlight a part of the situation. This highlighting shows that the speaker focuses on a certain part of the information about a situation, and this information is the component necessary for the speaker to maintain the conversation.

For example, the passive sentence (3) above has been known to carry the same information as the corresponding active sentence, except that the passive sentence

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<sup>3</sup> In 1975, Paul Grice proposed the following conversational maxims in "Logic and Conversation":

1. Maxims of Quantity: Make your contribution to the conversation as informative as necessary. Do not make your contribution to the conversation more informative than necessary.
2. Maxims of Quality: Do not say what you believe to be false. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.
3. Maxim of Relation: Be relevant.
4. Maxims of Manner: Avoid obscurity of expression. Avoid ambiguity. Be brief. Be orderly.

There have been criticisms of these maxims, both for not reflecting the full range of human communication, including dishonesty, and also for being parochial, not universal in terms of cultural accuracy. However, as guides to politeness or giving due consideration to your listener, they are still worth considering.

involves the demotion of the subject or the promotion of the object. However, this passive sentence, unlike the active sentence, emphasizes the action of washing the window rather than focusing on the window or the workers. One of the arguments for the focus on the action as a meaning of SJA is that the agent in the instrumental case is often suppressed. In many languages, agentless passives by far outnumber those with an overt agent. For written English, the percentage of agentless passives is said to be between 90% and 70% (cf. Svartvik 1966, Givón 1979 and Krauthamer 1981). Dušková (1972) gives the figure 85% for written Czech. Information about the agent in a SJA passive construction is restricted to the 3<sup>rd</sup> person, and this restriction attests that the SJA construction is not used to show the focus on the agent.

The promotion of the object from the corresponding non-SJA transitive construction has been thought of as the invariant meaning of the passive construction. However, from the speaker's point of view, the patient of the action which was considered new information in the direct object position, becomes old information (in the subject position) in the intransitive construction.

The SJA construction of the passive meaning shows that the speaker focuses on the action done to a patient – as in the grammatical subject – rather than on the participants.

### **3. Low elaboration and deleted participant.**

As mentioned above, the invariant meaning of intransitivity can be related to this meaning of different focus by the speaker. However, intransitivization has been explained only through the elimination of a participant serving as the object of the verb. Let us revisit an earlier example:

- (1) b. Mal'čik moetsja  
boy-N wash-PR-3S-SJA.  
The boy is washing (himself).

As seen in the example above, the patient of the action of washing exist on the semantic level—in other words, this SJA sentence signals that the boy is washing himself, not that

the boy is engaged in the action of washing. The deletion of the patient or object of the verb is purely a syntactic phenomenon, not a semantic one.

Another piece of evidence that SJA does not simply express the deletion of a participant is found in the SJA verbs corresponding to intransitive verbs. Russian dictionaries such as Evgen'eva (1981), Ožegov (1991) do not list the SJA forms for some intransitive verbs. In their dictionaries, a verb of motion *xodit'* 'walk' does not have a corresponding SJA verb, or at least this verb cannot have a SJA verb as an entry word. Any SJA verb derived from the verb of motion is supposed to be ungrammatical, as follows.

- (5) \*Mne ne xoditsja.  
 I-D no walk-PR-3S-SJA  
 I cannot walk.

However, 4 examples of *mne xoditsja* 'it is (possible) for me to walk' are found through Google.com. One is from a poem, another is from the Bible, and the last one is found in a sentence about difficulties experienced by a pregnant woman as follows:

- (6) Mne xoditsja normal'no, inogda v dušnom pomeščeenii načinaet slegka kryša exat'.  
 (<http://forum.sibmama.ru/viewtopic.php?t=4794&start=15&sid=7941db99d3bfb250c91fed41827688b7>)  
 I-D walk-PR-3S-SJA normally, sometimes in stuffy-P place-P begin-PR-3S little roof-N go-INF  
 Walking is fine for me, sometimes I start to feel a bit dizzy in a stuffy room.

The small number of examples signals that this SJA verb derived from the verb of motion is not frequently used, but the derivation of SJA verbs overall is fairly productive, especially with the agent in the dative case. Isačenko also mentioned this productivity of SJA verbs derived from intransitive verbs, even though he admitted that not all intransitive verbs have a SJA form (Isacenko 1960: 378).

The SJA construction with the agent in the dative case shows an interesting semantic feature of SJA in Russian. The following sentences show the correspondence between an ordinary transitive construction and the SJA verb derived from the transitive verb.

- (7) a. Ja ètu noč' prekrasno vspomnila.  
I-N this night-A very-well remember-PA-F.  
I remembered that night very well.
- b. Mne vspomnilas' èta noč'.  
I-D remember-PA-F-SJA that-N night-N.  
I remembered that night. (That night came back to me).

Both constructions designate a situation that the speaker, *I*, remembered one night. The transitive construction includes an agent, the speaker, and a patient (that night) which the SJA construction also includes. The SJA verb does not show deletion of any participant as the SJA verb in example (6). The difference between the SJA sentences including *xoditsja* and *vspomnilas'* is the grammatical identity of these constructions. Grammatically, the SJA sentence in (6) is an impersonal sentence, while the SJA sentence (7b) has a grammatical subject in the nominative case. Semantically, both SJA verbs include an agent or performer of the action in the dative case, and the agents do not have full control over the action of the verb. Sentence (7b) expresses what the speaker remembers that night by an external or internal motivation, while the corresponding non-SJA sentence expresses the same situation without any motivation affecting the speaker. The semantic difference between these SJA and non-SJA constructions is whether the speaker is affected or not – SJA construction expresses affected agent in the dative case, while non-SJA sentence is unmarked about the affectedness. .

This semantic feature is shared with the meaning of the passive SJA construction, because both participants, the agent and patient of a situation, remain in SJA and non-SJA constructions. Shibatani (1988) argues that the passive-reflexive correlation is a function of the common semantic property of the subject in the two constructions; both are affected entities. The passive subject is affected by an external agent, the reflexive subject by its own action. Shibatani's explanation is accepted as a view of the origin of the Indo-European reflexive passive, which is taken to have evolved from the active/middle voice system of Indo-European. The affectedness of the subject motivates the use of the same morphological marker for the reflexive and passive constructions. The difference between the reflexive and passive constructions is the affecting source –



an external entity in the passive construction and the entity's own action in the reflexive construction.

Example (7a) does not imply whether the subject is affected or not, while (7b) is marked in the affectedness of the agent. It is obvious that both constructions denote different narrative intentions of the speaker. The difference between non-SJA and SJA constructions can be described using the participant structure. Unlike the corresponding non-SJA construction, the SJA construction implies a hidden cause. The cause can be expressed explicitly, or can be implied in the context. The cause does not need to be uncooperative to the performance of the action as in example (6). The impersonal construction is also not a necessary condition for the expression of this meaning as seen in example (6). The SJA verb, the affected agent in the dative case, and the expression of the manner of the performance are the components necessary for expressing this meaning. What about the cause? The cause expediting or hindering the performance of the action is expressed contextually.

These kinds of SJA constructions denote a situation(s) without change in the number of the participants in a situation. The hidden cause can be another participant, but it seems right to consider the dative agent as an experiencer. However, it is important to notice that Kemmer's low elaboration of the event does not dictate a decrease of the number of participants of a situation. Therefore SJA should be explained without mentioning the deletion of participants in a situation

#### **4. The focus on situation.**

In the previous section, I insisted that SJA verbs express focus on the situation meant by the verb, not focus on the participants in the situation. The concept of topic and focus is too complicated to be defined here in full. In short, the topic often comprises old information already known to the speaker and hearer, and the focus is on new or contrastive information. King (1995: 76) suggested a three-way distinction of topic, discourse neutral, and focus in Russian, replacing the binary distinction of topic and focus. This three-way division provides a more explanatory account of the speaker's intention regarding the use of the linguistic form. Such a three-way division splits the

topic or theme into topicalized and discourse-neutral information. Topics always precede discourse-neutral material, and given the proper intonation and logical stress, foci can appear in different positions relative to the non-focus items.

In the case of SJA verbs expressing reflexive meaning, the following statistics regarding the position of SJA verbs in a sentence are applicable. The Russian National Corpus shows 47 hits of *moetsja* ‘s/he washes’ and 38 examples of *mojutsja* ‘they wash’. Among them 29 instances of *moetsja* (61.7%) and 25 instances of *mojutsja* (65.8%) appear as sentence final elements, while 18 instances of *moetsja* (38%) and 13 examples of *mojutsja* (34%) are located in the initial or middle positions.

The change of topic-focus structure of a sentence does not always occur with the change of the participant structure of a sentence. Some SJA sentences are semantically similar to each other. As mentioned before, the meanings of the passive and reflexive sentences are very close. The affected agent is the reason why both meanings share a morpheme to express these meanings. However, some Russian SJA sentences do not show an affected agent. For example, impersonal constructions denoting natural phenomena do not have an affected subject.

- (8) a. Den’ smerkaet.  
day-N get-dark-PR-3S  
It gets dark.
- b. Den’ smerkaetsja.  
day-N get-dark-PR-3S-SJA  
It gets dark.
- c. Smerkaet den’.  
get-dark-PR-3S day-N  
It gets dark.
- d. Smerkaetsja den’.  
get-dark-PR-3S-SJA day-N  
It gets dark.
- e. Smerkaet.  
get-dark-PR-3S  
It gets dark.
- f. Smerkaetsja.

get-dark-PR-3S-SJA  
 It gets dark.

The sentences above were found on the Internet, but the frequency of each sentence is different. The Russian National Corpus (<http://www.ruscorpora.ru>) shows the following frequencies: (8a): 0, (8b): 1, (8c): 0, (8d): 0, (8e): 1<sup>4</sup>, (8f): 23. The examples of *smerkaetsja* ‘gets dark’ include only 2 personal constructions, the rest of the examples represent impersonal constructions. Galkina-Fedoruk (1958: 129) states that impersonal verbs denoting daylight or climatological phenomena such as *svetaet* ‘it is getting light’, *večereet* ‘becomes evening’, etc. are used more frequently than the corresponding impersonal SJA verbs. However, the result above shows an opposite tendency – the Russian National Corpus lists just one use of *smerkaet* ‘gets dark’, but yields 24 contexts for the corresponding SJA verb *smerkaetsja* ‘gets dark’. A Google search likewise shows 154 hits for *smerkaet*, but 7,230 for *smerkaetsja*.

SJA uses are lexical, or even conventional, phenomena. For example, the verb with the similar meaning, *temneet* ‘gets dark’, shows a different frequency pattern than the verb *smerkaet*. Google has 143 uses of *temneetsja*, while *temneet* lands more than 69,500 hits on the Internet. These climatological phenomena can be expressed by a SJA verb without an affected agent, or in impersonal constructions. Fourteen examples of *svetaetsja* ‘gets bright’ and 119,000 hits for *svetaet* ‘gets bright’ also show that the use of SJA with the verbs of climatological meaning is lexically dependent or is this just conventional.

	Non-SJA	SJA
<i>Smerkat</i> ‘get dark’	154	7,230
<i>Svetat</i> ‘get bright’	14	119,000
<i>Večeret</i> ‘become evening’	81,900	49
<i>Temnet</i> ‘get dark’	69,500	143

Table 1. Frequency of SJA vs. non-SJA verbs of natural phenomena.

<sup>4</sup> Although the example is not an impersonal sentence. *Smerkaet step*, ... ‘the steppe gets dark, ...’

Another instance of no affected agent is known as the qualitative meaning of SJA. This kind of sentence can be considered a peripheral member of the semantic network of Russian SJA.

- (9) Sobaka kusaetsja.  
dog-N bite-3S-Pr-SJA.  
The dog bites.

The dog in the SJA sentence is not affected by any other participant, nor by the action of the verb. This sentence is about the dog's temper or characteristics, and this meaning can be paraphrased using the noun *čelovek* 'a person' as a direct object in some instances. However, the following example shows that the paraphrased sentence does express a contextual difference:

- (10) a. Esli sobaka kusaet čeloveka – eto ne novost'. Vot esli čelovek kusaet sobaku – togda eto novost'. (<http://iatp.edu.tn/samopiztsi/uzly.html>)  
if dog-N bite-3S-Pr person-A – it no news-N. Here if person-N bite-3S-Pr dog-A – then it news-N.  
If a dog bites a person – it is not news. But if a person bites a dog – then it is news.
- b. Slučaetsja, čto iz-za nevnimatel'nosti ili ošibki odnogo iz xendlerov, razgorjačennaja sobaka kusaet čeloveka. Esli Vy i drugoj xendler rabotaete pravil'no, to opasnost' popast' v takuju situaciju ravna nulju. (<http://pitbullworld.org/view.php?f=guliakov-sc>)  
happen-3S-Pr-SJA that because of carelessness-G or mistake-G one-G from handler-G-Pl excite-Pa-Pass dog-N bite-3S-Pr person-A. if you-N and other-N handler-N work-2Pl-Pr properly, that danger-N fall-Inf in(to) that-A situation-A equally zero-D.  
It can happen that an excited dog bites a person, due to carelessness or mistakes made by the handler. If you and the other handler work properly, the danger of that kind of situation equals zero.
- c. Esli sobaka kusaetsja. Nel'zja dopuskat', čtoby sobaka kusalas', potomu čto ona možet nanesti ser'eznye povreždenija. ([http://www.professional.spb.ru/SEMINAR/Dogs/Dog\\_vosp/Dog\\_edu/11.htm](http://www.professional.spb.ru/SEMINAR/Dogs/Dog_vosp/Dog_edu/11.htm))  
if dog-N bite-3S-Pr-SJA. Never allow-Inf, that dog-N bite-Pa-F-SJA, because that she-N can-3S inflict-Inf serious-N-Pl injury-Pl.  
If a dog bites. Never let the dog bite, because it can cause serious injury.

If this SJA verb *kusat'sja* 'tend to bite' can be paraphrased with *kusat' čeloveka* 'bite a person', then all the expressions above should be considered synonymous, i.e. these sentences are totally interchangeable by one another. The examples, however, show slight semantic distinctions in different contexts. The sentence with the SJA verb (10c) is used in a context which describes the dog's feature. *Dog* appears as a topic of the whole context, and the speaker keeps talking about the dog and the dog's behavior, which can go badly. The sentences with *kusat' čeloveka* 'bite a person or people' (10a) and (10b) are about the incident which can happen to a person, not about the dog. The person in the accusative case in example (10a) plays a role of focus contrasted with the dog in the following sentence (10b). Sentence (10b) is also about a situation or incident whereby an excited or agitated dog bites a person, not about the dog's tendency to bite.

These two examples without an affected agent attest that Russian SJA verbs express different meanings in addition to the meaning of participant change. SJA verbs in impersonal constructions describe a situation indicated by the verb, and the SJA constructions of the qualitative meaning denote an action as a general behavior or characteristic of the subject-possessor of the feature. These meanings of SJA are not related to a change in the participant structure, but to a change in the topic-focus structure of a situation. This function of changing the topic-focus structure of a sentence is realized in the process of attachment of SJA, and the speaker chooses a construction according to his narrative intention. As a result of SJA attachment, these sentences come to express different meanings from the meaning of the so-called corresponding non-SJA sentences.

## 5. Conclusion.

SJA in Russian is related etymologically to the pronoun, and the pronoun is used to refer to a participant already mentioned in a situation. However, SJA verbs in Russian come to have more functions than a simple coreference of a participant.

Here I suggest that SJA morphologically signals a change in the topic-focus structure of a situation. This function can explain why a speaker chooses aSJA sentence over non-SJA in the case that both sentences are semantically similar to each other. As we see in example (10) the speaker chooses the SJA verb *kusaetsja* '(a dog) bites' over

the non-SJA phrase *kusaet človeka* ‘(a dog) bites a person’ to describe a certain dog’s temper. The speaker puts more focus on the action or situation indicated by the verb rather than on the agent or the patient of the action.

The speaker’s pragmatic preference can be explained using the traditional definition of the function of SJA: signaling intransitivity. This focus on the action or situation is a very semantic concept, while the concept of intransitivity is a grammatical as well as semantic one. The intransitive meaning introduces a new action or event by the verb, while the transitive construction expresses an action performed on a new entity—the patient of the action. The new information introduced by SJA expresses a highlighted or emphasized part of a situation, which is often an action encoded by a verb.

This pragmatic information, along with a certain constructional element such as an agent and an experiencer in the dative case, denotes a situation that the agent-experiencer performs or experiences an action. The agent-experiencer is backgrounded, because s/he does not have full control over the performance of the action. The SJA verb here accentuates the backgrounding function already expressed in part by the dative case. These kinds of SJA sentences are often accompanied by the cause expediting or hindering the performance of the action in a given context, as in examples (6) and (7).

SJA in Russian functions as a morphological marker of the speaker’s focus on the action expressed by the verb. This function might be mentioned already by the Russian linguists, Vinogradov, Isačenko, etc., but their term intransitivity has been interpreted very narrowly—for example, intransitivity is usually taken to mean deletion of a patient of a transitive non-SJA construction. Of course, SJA etymologically expresses the meaning of participant deletion, but here SJA also marks or highlights the speaker’s focus by foregrounding the action or by backgrounding the participant of the corresponding non-SJA construction. This meaning can be described as non-primary, but this meaning plays an important role in understanding the function of SJA in a sentence.

The research about the pragmatic meaning of a sentence is very complicated, because pragmatic factors such as word order, intonation, etc. should be considered in a vast amount of linguistic data. Some part of the research is done in Ahn (2006), and this pragmatic approach accompanied by other analyses (such as an analysis of the function of the etymologically-related morphemes in other Slavic languages and analysis about the

historical development of the morpheme) will prove necessary in revealing the full function of SJA. Then we will be able to give a more plausible explanation about the Russian SJA verbs to our students.

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