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INTERPRETATIVE VERBS, INTERPRETATIVE CONSTRUCTIONS WITH CONVERB CLAUSES AND OTHER CONVERB CONSTRUCTIONS MARKING ONE SINGLE EVENT[1]

Abstract

The paper deals with interpretative verbs as established by (Apresjan 2004) and interpretative converb constructions as established by (Boguslavskij 1977) and afterwards discussed in a cross-linguistic typological perspective in (Haspelmath & König 1995). It is shown that Apresjan's approach offers a key to the semantics of converb (DEEPR) constructions. Special attention is paid to converb constructions of the V – DEEPR type with postponed DEEPR clause and both V and DEEPR in the perfective verbal aspect (of the type *On prosčitalsja, poexav na avtobuse* 'He made a mistake, having gone by bus'), and their syntactic equivalents.

1   Introduction

1.1   Interpretative Verbs

Working with a fundamental classification of predicates (cf. Apresjan 2003, 2006) Ju. D. Apresjan established the class of interpretative verbs as one of the main verbal classes of almost the same rank as verbs with the meaning of action (dejstvie), activity (dejatel'nost'), behaviour (povedenie), occupation (zanjatie), impact (vozdejstvie), process (process), manifestation (projavlenie), position in space (položenie v prostranstve), state (sostojanie), quality (svojstvo), parameter (parametr), existence (suščestvovanie) etc. (cf. Apresjan 2004:8). The lexicographic definition of an interpretative verb has a standard form with one part –

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the presupposition P, and a second part – the assertion R. Let us look at an example of such a definition (Apresjan 2004:9):

(1) *X pooščrjaet Y-a, delaja P* = 'X sdelal P [presuppozicija]; govorjaščij sčitaet, čto P otnositsja k klassu dejstvij, pokazyvajuščix, čto čelovek, kotoryj ix soveršaet, odobrjaet dejstvija ili dejatel'nost' drugogo čeloveka i xočet pobudit' ego prodolžat' dejstvovat' tak že [assercija]'

   X encourages Y, doing P = 'X did P [presupposition]; the speaker thinks that P belongs to the class of actions which show that a person who completes them welcomes the actions or activities of another person and wants to stimulate this person to continue doing so [assertion]' (Translation – *T.R.*)

As one can see the so-called 'interpretation' is introduced by the component 'the speaker thinks'. In the following examples from the National Corpus of Russian (NCR)[2]

(2) *Bolee togo, gosudarstvo ètu dejatel'nost' pooščrjalo, osvobodiv „star'ev-ščikov" ot naloga.* /Evgenij Borisenkov. Metalloiskateli (2004) // „Za rulem", 2004.03.15
   'Moreover, the state encouraged this activity, having exempted the „ragmen" from tax.'

we have X = *gosudarstvo* 'state', P = *osvobodit' ot naloga* 'exempt from tax', Y = *dejatel'nost'* 'activity'[3],

(3) *Osobenno sblizilis' oni s Dilejny, i tot pooščrjal Erika bol'še pet', bol'še pisat' pesni i v konce koncov polučat' kajf ot togo, čto on muzykant.* /Cena ljubit gitarista (2002) // „Drugoj", 2002.11.15
   'They especially chummed up with Delany, and he (=Delany) encouraged Erik more to sing, more to write songs, and in the end to get satisfaction from the fact that he (is) a musician.'

we have X = *Dilejny* 'Delany', P is not stated explicitly[4], Y = *Erik*.

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[3] Here, the actant Y is an abstract noun, not a person. According to the data from NCR this kind of construction is much more frequent than the construction with names of persons. However, it is clear that the activity is assigned to the persons called *"star'evščiki"*, cf. *Bolee togo, gosudarstvo pooščrjalo „star'evščikov", osvobodiv ix ot naloga.* 'Moreover, the state encouraged the „ragmen", having exempted them from tax.'

Going into lexical semantics (Apresjan 2004:11) distinguishes among several types of interpretation:

a) ethical interpretation (the most numerous group): *pomogat'* 'to help', ... , *pokrovitel'stvovat'* 'to patronize'; ... ; *podvodit' (kogo-l.)* 'to betray (somebody)', ... ; ... ; *balovat' (rebenka)* 'to spoil (a child)'; ... ; *oskorbljat'* 'to offend', ... ; *izdevat'sja* 'to mock', ... ; ... ; *nakazyvat'* 'to punish', ... , *pooščrjat'* 'to encourage'; *zloupotrebljat' (doveriem)* 'to abuse (somebody's confidence)';

b) juridical and religious interpretation: *narušat' pravila* 'to infringe the rules', ... ; ... ; *grešit'* 'to commit a sin', ...; ... , *soblaznjat'* 'to seduce';

c) logical, or truth-conditional interpretation: *ošibat'sja* 'to make a mistake', ... ; *preuveličivat'* 'to exaggerate', ... ; *nedoocenivat'* 'to underestimate', *pereocenivat'* 'to overestimate';

d) utilitarian interpretation: *vyigryvat'* 'to win', ... ; *(po)gorjačit'sja* 'to get excited, to overreact', ... ; *oplošat'* 'to misjudge', ... , *promaxnut'sja* 'to fail to hit the goal';

e) combined interpretation (mostly a combination of ethical and logical interpretation): *izobražat' v černom cvete* 'to depict in black color', ... ; *priukrašivat'* 'to prettify', ... ; *obmanivat'* 'to deceive', ... , *krivit' dušoj* 'to dissemble one's feelings'.

Apresjan investigates aspectual properties of (prototypical) interpretative verbs. Their most important aspectual characteristic is perfectivity (perfektivnost'), i.e. when used in the form of NESOV NAST (imperfective aspect, present tense) with reference to the moment of speech, most interpretative verbs convey the perfective meaning (perfektnoe značenie), and not the actual-durative one: *Vy ošibaetes' <predaete obščie interesy, postupaete nizko>* 'You are making a mistake <betraying common interests, acting meanly>' means that the person has already done something which is interpreted as a mistake, a betrayal of common interests, or meanness (Apresjan 2004:6, 17f.).

Further on, (Apresjan 2004:18f.) discusses several syntactic characteristics of interpretative verbs. Most importantly, the valency P, if expressed explicitly, comes in *five* different ways:

1) as a converb construction (*On prosčitalsja, poexav na avtobuse* 'He made a mistake, having gone by bus'; *Vy preuveličivaete, govorja, čto p'esa provalilas'* 'You are exaggerating, saying that the play was a failure'),

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[4] As stated by (Apresjan 2004:9) this is a quite regular situation (the actant P being implied by the context).

2) as a subordinate clause with the conjunctions *esli* 'if' or *kogda* 'when' (*Vy preuveličivaete, kodga govorite, čto p'esa provalilas'* 'You are exaggerating when you say that the play was a failure'),

3) as a coordinative chain (*Devica mešala emu vesti mašinu – bez umolku taratorila, vertelas', xvatala za ruku* 'The girl disturbed him to drive the car – she unceasingly jabbered, hovered around, grabbed his hand'),

4) as a pseudo-coordinative chain of the type *P i tem samym R* 'P and thereby R' (*On opozdal i tem samym vsex podvel* 'He came late and thereby let us/them all down'),

5) as a colloquial construction with an anaphoric sententional pronoun of the type *èto* 'that', *tut* 'here' (*Èto ty pogorjačilsja* 'That you overreacted'; *Tut ty oplošal* 'Here you misjudged').

Type 1, i.e. the converb construction, brings us directly to the following Section 1.2.

1.2   Converb Constructions

In Russian, constructions with a finite verb (V) and a converb (also called adverbial participle, in Russian deepričastie - DEEPR) can come in 2 x 4 x 2 = 16 different sentence types according to the following scheme:

DEEPR: verbal aspect	V: verbal aspect and tense	Position of DEEPR clause relative to V
	SOV	
SOV	NESOV	PREPOS
NESOV	PROSH	POSTPOS
	NEPROSH	
2	4	2

where SOV – perfective verbal aspect, NESOV – imperfective verbal aspect; PROSH – past tense, NEPROSH – non-past tense, i.e. present or future tense; PREPOS – DEEPR clause precedes V, POSTPOS – DEEPR clause follows V.

For the purpose of this paper we will have a look at a subgroup of the above scheme – constructions with both the finite verb and the converb in the perfective verbal aspect, and the converb clause either preceding, or following the main clause. Let us begin with two preposed and one postposed converb clauses:

(4) DEEPR_SOV_PREPOS – V_SOV_PROSH

Otorvavšis' ot bumag, on vzgljanul na Efimovu. (NCR)

'Having turned away from the papers, he looked at Efimova.'

(5) DEEPR_SOV_PREPOS – V_SOV_NEPROSH

… porjadočnaja ženščina, razgljadev duraka, perestanet im zanimat'sja. (Akimova & Kozinceva 1987:273)[5]

'… a decent woman, having made out a fool, will give up associating with him.'

(6) V_SOV_PROSH – DEEPR_SOV_POSTPOS

Efimova vyšla, ne poproščavšis'. (NCR)

'Efimova walked out, not having said „Good bye".'

Looking at the iconic-chronological „figure"[6] of sentences (4) - (6) I agree with the point made by (Rappaport 1984:90):

(7) "There is a natural iconic relation between linear order, on the one hand, and temporal or teleological order, on the other. Linear anteriority can be associated with temporal anteriority, and linear posteriority – with temporal posteriority. Similarly, since a means is logically prior to its consequence, linear anteriority can be associated with a means, and linear posteriority – with its consequence. These iconic relations can be violated when the AvPrt (adverbial participle, i.e. converb – *T.R.*) clause is postposed, but not when it is preposed. Thus, in the relevant aspects, an initial AvPrt clause must observe iconicity, while a final AvPrt clause need not do so."

Indeed, examples (4) and (5) with preposed converb clause clearly fulfill the iconic-chronological condition: Turning away from the papers precedes looking at Efimova, and making out a fool precedes giving up associating with him.

Let us now have a closer look at the case of the final AvPrt clause, i.e. the postponed DEEPR clause, and link our considerations to an example discussed in (Boguslavskij (1977:271).

To my knowledge, I.M. Boguslavskij was the first to define the interpretative meaning for converb constructions, his example being the following:

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[5] As one can see from this example, inserted converb clauses are classified according to their position relative to the verb in the main clause.

[6] I use the term „figure" in order to refrain from terminological debates on tempus and taxis.

(8) *On sygral na ruku pravym, perenesja <tem, čto perenes> srok obsuždeni-ja zakonoproekta.*
'He played into the hands of the right-wingers, having moved <by the fact that he moved> the date of the reading of the bill draft.'

With respect to the semantics of this sentence, (Boguslavskij 1977:271) states:

(9) „ ... there is only one event (sobytie) A which is interpreted (interpre-tirujetsja) by the speaker as B. In other words, B consists (or mani-fests itself) (zaključaetsja (ili projavljaetsja) in A." (Translation from the Russian original – *T.R.*)

In other words, the postponed converb construction (8) with interpretative mean-ing gives us an obvious example of a „figure" where linear posteriority does not mean temporal posteriority.

Let us now try the inversion of the main and the converb clauses of example (8) resulting in the following synonymous sentence.

(10) *Perenesja <Tem, čto perenes> srok obsuždenija zakonoproekta, on syg-ral na ruku pravym.*
'Having moved <By the fact that he moved> the date of the reading of the bill draft, he played into the hands of the right-wingers.'

According to Rappaport's rule (7) the initial converb clause must observe iconi-city, and since (8) and (10) are synymous, the moving of the date of the reading of the bill draft should then precede the playing into the hands of the right-wingers, which obviously is not the case: According to Boguslavskij's statement (9) there is only one event, and not two subsequent events.

The solution to this problem is the fact that the phraseme *IGRAT' NA RUKU* 'TO PLAY INTO THE HANDS' belongs to the class of interpretative predica-tes, its sententional form being the following: *X igraet na ruku Y-y, delaja P* 'X plays into the hands of Y, doing P'. In the above examples (8) and (10) X = *on* 'he', Y = *pravye* 'the right-wingers', P = *perenesti srok obsuždenija zakonopro-ekta* 'to move the date of the reading of the bill draft', and – according to Apres-jan's scheme – P is the presuppositional part of the lexicographic definition of the *single* situation described by the interpretative phraseme in question.

Looking back onto example (6) the situation is different: VYJTI 'to walk out' is not an interpretative verb, but still the situation gives us the impression of one single event.

As a consequence, the iconic-chronological „figure" of converb constructions must be discussed in more detail. I will try to do this by starting from the case of

„interpretative" converb constructions with interpretative verbs, and then look onto other cases.

1.3 Interpretative Verbs, Interpretative Converb Constructions and Other Cases of Single Events

1.3.1 Interpretative converb constructions with interpretative verbs

According to Apresjan (see Section 1.1 above, construction type 1) the expression of the valency P of interpretative verbs in the form of a converb clause is one of the regular cases. In other words, the 'interpretative' semantics of a converb clause that depends on an interpretative verb is based on its *actant status* in relation to the predicate of the main clause. The iconic-chronological "figure" of the complex sentence is one *single* situation, and it is eventually only the *internal* chronological ordering of the components of the interpretative verbal meaning which can be applied. Let us remember that in Apresjan's definition of the verb *pooščrjat'* 'to encourage' the doing of P only „internally" precedes the interpretation proper.[7]

1.3.2 Interpretative converb constructions with non-interpretative verbs?

It seems the case that interpretative converb constructions can also be found with non-interpretative verbs. Consider the following examples from NCR:

(11) *V 1890 godu inženery soedinili bačok s siden'em v edinuju konstrukciju, sozdav **tem samym** proobraz sovremennogo unitaza.*
'In 1890 engineers conjoined the bowl with the seat to a joint construction, having created thereby the prototype of the modern toilet bowl.'

(12) *V nojabre japonskie vojska pererezali Kitajsko-Vostočnuju železnuju dorogu (KVZhD), vyzvav **tem samym** obmen žestkimi notami meždu SSSR i Japoniej.*
'In November the Japanese troops cut the Chinese-Eastern Railway (KVŽD), having caused thereby an exchange of harsh diplomatic notes between the USSR and Japan.'

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[7] However, to my opinion, 'X sdelal P [presuppozicija]' 'X did P [presupposition]' is not the only proper way to define the presupposed event P. It seems closer to the truth to allow for the following alternative: 'X sdelal <načal delat', delaet> P [presuppozicija]' 'X did <began to do, does> P [presupposition]'.

(13) *Naprimer, v nejtral'nyx vodax možno postroit' takoe sooruženie, oboznačiv* **tem samym** *svoe prisutstvie, pritom nikak ne narušaja normy meždunarodnogo prava.*

'For example, in neutral waters it is possible to build such a construction, having marked thereby one's presence, by that in no way infringing the norms of international law.'

The structure of these sentences is the same as in Boguslavskij's example

(14) *On perenes srok obsuždenija zakonoproekta, sygrav* **tem samym** *na ruku pravym.*

'He moved the date of the reading of the bill draft, having **thereby** played into the hands of the right-wingers.'

However, it seems clear that neither *sozdat' (proobraz)* 'to create (a prototype)', nor *vyzvat' (obmen)* 'to cause (an exchange)', nor *oboznačit' (prisutstvie)* 'to mark (the presence)' should be called interpretative verbs. Nevertheless, a sort of **unity** of the complex situation as expressed by *tem samym* 'thereby' is quite obvious. Cf. also construction type 4 from Apresjan's syntactic list – the pseudo-coordinative chain of the type *P i tem samym R* 'P and thereby R' (*On opozdal i tem samym vsex podvel* 'He came late and thereby let us/them all down').

As a consequence, there is one question to be solved: Why do non-interpretative verbs like *sozdat' (proobraz)* 'to create (a prototype)', *vyzvat' (obmen)* 'to cause (an exchange)', and *oboznačit' (prisutstvie)* 'to mark (the presence)' easily allow for the interpretative reading of converb constructions? The answer seems to be the following:

Sozdat' 'to create', as used here, has the following actant structure: *X creates Y out of Z for the purpose W; vyzvat'* 'to cause', as used here, has the following actant structure: *X causes Y by Z; oboznačit'* 'to mark', as used here, has the following actant structure: *X marks Y by Z.* In all three cases, the matrix clauses in sentences (11) – (13) instantiate the **actant** Z, so the *single-situational* reading is easily at hand. I propose to call this unity of situation **supported** by the semantics of the connector *P, i tem samym Q* 'P, thereby Q'. [8]

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[8]   For discussion of single complex situations expressed by two predicates in various syntactic configurations cf. (Poljanskij 1987:250-253; Bondarko 1987; Akimova & Kozinceva 1987: 265-267; Weiss 1993, 1994).

Now we are close to the solution of the problem posed by example (6) from above: *POPROŠČAT'SJA* 'to say „Good bye"' contains in its meaning the component 'going away' as a prepositional part. Therefore example (6) exhibits a single event structure similar to that of interpretative verbs, but different from interpretative converb constructions.

2 Interpretative constructions and their syntactic variation

2.1 The Russian explanatory lexeme TEM SAMYM

The phraseme *TEM SAMYM* 'THEREBY' follows Boguslavskij's rule for explanatory words (Boguslavskij 1977:227):

(15) „In sentences with converb constructions which are in the relation of synonymous paraphrasing, there can be used one and the same explanatory words, in that (pričem) they are attached to one and the same verb, occurring in one case in the final verbal form, and in the other in the converb form." (Translation from the Russian original – *T.R.*)

Cf. from above (14) *On perenes srok obsuždenija zakonoproekta, sygrav **tem samym** na ruku pravym.* 'He moved the date oft he reading of the bill draft, having **thereby** played into the hands of the right-wingers.' equals

(16) *Perenesja srok obsuždenija zakonoproekta, on sygral **tem samym** na ruku pravym.*
'Having moved the date of the reading of the bill draft, he played **thereby** into the hands of the right-wingers.'

As a consequence, we can ***add*** the construction of type (14) as a ***sixth*** possible syntactic construction for interpretative verbs – here, the interpretative verb constitutes the postposed DEEPR clause, while the presupposed event P constitutes the preposed matrix clause.

2.2 The Russian two-part conjunction TEM, ČTO

To complete the list of syntactic variation, one instantiation of example (8) above, i.e.

(17) *On sygral na ruku pravym **tem, čto** perenes srok obsuždenija zakonoproekta.*

'He played into the hands of the right-wingers by the fact that he moved the date of the reading of the bill draft.'

shall be considered a **seventh** possible type of syntactic construction of interpretative verbs – here, the presupposed event P comes as a subordinated clause, linked to the main clause by the two-part conjunction *R tem, čto P* 'R by the fact that P'.

2.3   Interpretative Constructions in German: The Case of a Non-Converb Language Type

Example (17) from above is very close to what is one of the ways to convey the interpretative meaning in German. There is a two-part conjunction – *DA-DURCH, DASS* 'by this that' which serves as a means for connecting the main clause which contains the interpretative predicate and the subordinated clause which expresses the presupposed event P, cf. the German word-by-word equivalent of (17):

(18) *Er spielte den Rechten **dadurch** in die Hände, **dass** er den Termin der Beratung des Gesetzesentwurfs verschob.*

Another connector of less „instrumental" descendence serves as the **main** means to connect the interpretative predicate within the main clause and the subordinated clause which expresses the presupposed event P – *INDEM* 'in that', cf. the German equivalent of (17) and (18):

(19) *Er spielte den Rechten in die Hände, **indem** er den Termin der Beratung des Gesetzesentwurfs verschob.*

For non-interpretative verbs the German conjuction *indem* works the same way, cf., e.g., sentence (11) from above and its Russian and German paraphrases

(20) *V 1890 godu inženery sozdali proobraz sovremennogo unitaza, soediniv bačok s siden'em v edinuju konstrukciju.*
*Im Jahr 1890 schufen Ingenieure den Prototypen der modernen Toilette, **indem** sie die Schüssel mit dem Sitz zu einer Gesamtkonstruktion verbanden.*
'In 1890 engineers created the prototype of the modern toilet bowl in that they conjoined the bowl with the seat to a joint construction.'

Another German connector – *WODURCH* 'by which' – is available when it comes to the inverted distribution of the interpretative predicate (now in the subordinated clause) and the event P (now in the main clause), cf. the equivalent of (14)

> (21) *Er verschob den Termin der Beratung des Gesetzesentwurfs, **wodurch** er den Rechten in die Hände spielte.*
> 'He moved the date of the reading of the bill draft by which he played into the hands of the right-wingers.'

3 Implications for Meaning-Text-Theory: Lexicon and grammar

3.1 Lexicon: Russian and German

In his study on interpretative verbs Ju.D. Apresjan makes a distinction between *interpretative verbs*, *evaluative verbs* (ocenočnye glagoly) and *verbs of behaviour* (glagoly povedenija). Cf. for the following properties (Apresjan 2004:11-14):

- The main difference between interpretative and evaluative verbs is that the two components – an action P and its interpretation R / its evaluation E play different roles in the lexicographic definition: interpretative verbs take P as presupposition and R as assertion, while evaluative verbs take P as assertion and E as modal frame, e.g. (Apresjan 2004:12):

> (22) *To huddle (Jutit'sja)* = 'to live in a premise, where there is less room than is necessary for normal life [assertion]; the speaker poorly assesses the conditions in which the subject is forced to live, or wants the addressee to assess them in this way [modal frame]' Cf. *The town Grozny was shelled, people huddled in underground stories, without water and light* („Itogi", 27.08.96) (Translation from the Russian original – *T.R.*).

- Nevertheless, there are verbs which combine both properties, i.e. the above distinction between interpretative and evaluative verbs is true only for prototypical cases.
- The lexicographic definition of verbs of behavior like *bezobrazničat'* 'to behave in an improper manner', *bujanit'* 'to raise the roof', *gerojstvovat'* 'to play the heroe', *deboširovat'* 'to paint the town red' falls apart into assertion and modal frame, P forming the assertion, and an interpretation of P making part of the modal frame, e.g. (Apresjan 2004: 14):

(23) *X hooligans (X xuliganit)* = 'X performs different actions P which dis-
turb the normal existence of other people or are dangerous for them, alt-
hough do not endanger their life [assertion]; the speaker thinks that P
heavily infringes the norms of social behaviour and that X behaves in this
way on purpose; therefore the speaker assesses the behaviour of X harshly
[modal frame]' Cf. *They hooliganed in the streets, offended passers-by,
performed different wild fooleries, and in general were not able to behave
properly.* (N. Nosov) (Translation from the Russian original – *T.R.*).

All these observations on *lexical* semantics can be applied to both Russian
and German, and to English, too.

• When it comes to the semantics of *grammatical* categories, Russian aspect
  plays a crucial rule, and such properties cannot apply to typologically dif-
  ferent verbal systems like those of German or English. Cf. on Russian
  (Apresjan 2004:14):

„Every behaviour presupposes the observability (nabljudaemost') of what
a person really does, in that (pričem) one usually speaks about a behaviour
when one sees a series of single-type acts (rjad odnotipnyx aktov) of a person
or another living being over the period of one round of observation (na
protjaženii odnogo raunda nabljudenija); cf. *to balk (artačit'sja), to paint the
town red (deboširit'), to buffoon (pajasničat')*. Therefore, behaviours, in con-
trast to interpretative and most of evaluative verbs can freely be used in the
actual-durative meaning of the *imperfective* aspect. Cf. *Look how she is gri-
macing <is behaving capriciously> (Posmotri, kak ona krivljaetsja
<kapriznicaet>), Stop grimacing <behaving capriciously> (Perestan' kri-
vljat'sja <kapriznicat'>), When the police came the crowd was still roi-
stering (Kogda pribyla policija, tolpa vse ešče besčinstvovala)* etc." (Transla-
tion from the Russian original – *T.R.*).

3.2   Grammar: Russian and German

Most obviously, the ways to convey the meaning of 'interpretation' in Russian
by converb constructions, and the need to use different connectors in German
present a certain challenge to grammarians, above all for those working on sys-
tems of automatic translation under the Meaning-Text-approach. This paper,
being mainly devoted to the lexicon, is not the place to elaborate on this point.

4   Conclusion

We were able to show that the meaning of 'interpretation' is important for both the lexicon and the grammar and that the lexicographic definition of Ju.D. Apresjan as presented in (Apresjan 2004) is a key to the understanding of Russian converb constructions and their syntactic equivalents in Russian and German.

Acknowledgements

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