

**Hans Schlegel. *Bildung, Bedeutung und Gebrauch des russischen Verbalaspekts. Teil 1: Theoretische Grundlagen (Lehrbuch)*.** Specimina Philologiae Slavicae, 136. Munich: Verlag Otto Sagner, 2002. 326 pp. €32.00, paper. / **Teil 2: Informationen, Aufgaben, Übungen.** Specimina Philologiae Slavicae, 141. Munich: Verlag Otto Sagner, 2005. 276 pp. €30.00, paper.

The first volume of Schlegel's two-volume work on Russian verbal aspect is conceived as a textbook and provides the theoretical bases that underlie the practical language exercises contained in the companion volume. It begins with an indispensable index of numerous terminological abbreviations as well as explanations of signs and symbols to which the reader or language learner must constantly refer, if only to justify their role as graphic explanations of the complex relations described in the work. Unfortunately, the abbreviations and explanations are arranged topically rather than alphabetically and are grouped by theoretical concept. The abbreviations—both German and Russian—reflect a very broad spectrum of concepts common to both traditional aspectology (e.g., terminativity/aterminativity, perfective/imperfective aspect, Aktionsarten, and so on) and the particular theory propounded here, including: differential semantic traits; temporal and aspectual reference points; “event,” “speech,” and “reference” as understood in the framework of Reichenbach's temporal logic; and “state of affairs” (*aktionale Situation*), i.e., actions, states, and events. Terminativity (telicity) also plays an important role in the application of graphic symbols alongside such concepts as “duration” (*Dauer*), “iterativity”/“repetition” (*Wiederholung*), “sequence of actions” (*Handlungskette*), “parallelism of actions” (*Parallelität von Handlungen*), “incidence” (*Inzidenz*), etc. An appendix, which brings together the definitions of the principal aspectological concepts (pp. 307–313), also serves as a doubtless necessary aid to users of this work.

The textbook is intended primarily for use at the university level. Given the complexity of the grammatical category of aspect, the book's stated goal is to provide—by means of a “multimodal and multidimensional approach”—a theory with sufficient “explanatory force” for practical language use (p. 17). As presented in chapter 2 (pp. 21–34), the basic mechanisms of aspect use are understood as interactions between verbs and the context(s) in which they occur, verbs being defined basically by actionality (lexical aspect) and “terminativity” (i.e., telicity), with context(s) similarly classified according to “terminativity.” The aspectual system is viewed as a projection of the temporal system onto individual time intervals (p. 31), a kind of temporal microsystem whereby any given action is situated relative to an “aspectual reference point,” i.e., a point in time to which the speaker refers or at which the speaker mentally situates her/himself (this stands in contrast to tense, whereby any given action is situated relative to the moment of speech).

Chapter 3 is devoted to the formal expression of the category of aspect in Russian (pp. 35–98), including Aktionsarten (both in the narrow sense of lexical derivation and in the broader sense of lexical semantics) as well as correlative pairs of verbs of motion and their delineation vis-à-vis aspectual pairs per se. While recognizing as “true” aspectual pairs those whose imperfective members are derived through stem suffixation, Schlegel also acknowledges so-called “functional aspectual pairs” like *pisat'/napisat'* ‘write’, which are formed “pleonastically” by means of a semantically redundant verbal prefix (an appropriate view from the standpoint of both theory and actual language use; see summarizing table, p. 98).

The remaining chapters are devoted to the functions of the verbal aspects and the uses made of them, beginning with a broad range of meanings in the indicative mood (pp. 99–

207) and an extraordinarily painstaking differentiation among them based on general and particular meanings of the aspects and on isolated and correlatively associated as well as polytemporal (iterative, durative, or potential) actions and abstractly obtaining states. Schlegel goes on to discuss instances of aspectual synonymy and neutralization and the special considerations surrounding negation. The contextual “indicators” that Schlegel provides (pp. 178–180) are no doubt of great practical value in using the language, as are his simplified “basic rules” for aspect use (pp. 191–204). The two algorithms that follow are meant to encapsulate these simplified rules in addition to his complex overall description of aspect in the indicative mood. Schlegel then proceeds to discuss aspect use in the imperative and conditional/subjunctive moods as well as the infinitive (both as subject and as complement; pp. 208–261). The ensuing chapters—on situational types and textual varieties as well as interactions between aspectuality (qua functional semantic category), temporality, and modality—conclude the textual portion of Schlegel’s monograph. This is topped off with a bibliography (pp. 317–326) together with a reference to the index of didactic-methodological titles found at the end of volume 2.

Volume 2 contains the work’s practically-oriented language material and is designed so that it can be used independently of volume 1; for this reason the individual chapters of volume 2 are introduced by “guidelines to theoretically orient” the reader. A virtual requirement for using this volume is the extensive appendix on pp. 215–218, which consists of a glossary of terms denoting derivational processes and specific meanings of the aspects (including various overviews and algorithms) as well as a “thesaurus” of aspect-related terms. The exercises themselves are divided into sixteen “complexes,” which contain additional subdivisions dealing with concrete indicative and non-indicative uses of the aspects. Each subdivision begins with the necessary theoretical information, followed by various types of exercises, including German-Russian translation exercises and instructions for the user her/himself to provide appropriate theoretical explanations of given aspectual phenomena. A key to the exercises is provided at the end of each “complex”; besides being an ineluctable necessity for users pursuing independent study, the answer keys also serve as a teaching aid.

Indeed, it goes without saying that Schlegel’s target audience here includes language learners and instructors alike. Nevertheless, in view of the complexity of the material presented, it is doubtful whether students will be able to work their way through this book without first receiving some formal introduction to independent language study. As far as university-level foreign-language instruction is concerned, linguistically attuned native- and non-native-speaker instructors may come away from both volumes having significantly enhanced their own theoretical understanding of verbal aspect and may, in an appropriate classroom setting, supplement the book’s exercises with instructional material of their own. On the whole, however, any didactic use of Schlegel’s work will probably be confined to Slavic Studies at the college or university level; even there, using this work will entail a considerable expenditure of time—an expenditure which will, admittedly, be rewarded with the attainment of a more profound understanding of Russian (and Slavic) verbal aspect than that made possible by conventional grammars and other instructional media.

The two volumes reviewed here represent the culmination of a four-volume cycle produced by Schlegel. The two earlier volumes were also published in the “*Specimina Philologiae Slavicae*” series and concentrate on the two theoretical concepts that play a pivotal role in the volumes under review, viz., terminativity (published in 1999 as vol. 124) and the aspectual reference point (published in 2000 as vol. 130). The complete cycle not only makes an important contribution to understanding and mastering aspect in Russian, but, with appropriate modifications, can also be transferred to other Slavic languages.

Indeed, Schlegel's work may additionally provide a basis for typological research beyond the Slavic language family alone, in the broader field of general aspectology.

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