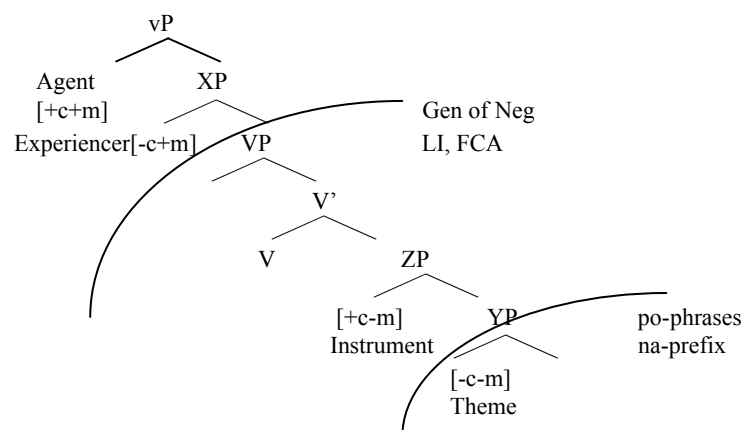


**Animacy and Unaccusativity in Russian**

**Basic Problem.** Unaccusativity in Russian has received a substantial amount of attention in the literature (Babby (1980), Pesetsky (1982), Babyonyshev (1996), Borik (1995), Harves (2002) among others). A number of diagnostics have been discovered to distinguish between the two types of intransitive verbs in Russian. In this paper, I will argue that animacy is an important component of unaccusativity that has been overlooked or misanalyzed in the literature before. I will show that for all standardly assumed unaccusativity diagnostics in Russian, animacy consistently matters for the result. I will offer an account to this generalization in line with Reinhart's (2002) theta role decomposition analysis where animacy effects with unaccusativity tests follow from distinct theta role specifications assigned to animate and inanimate arguments. **Data.** Animacy effects with five standard unaccusativity diagnostics are demonstrated in (1)-(5). For the Distributive *po*-phrases (Distr. *po*-phrase) and the verb prefixation (Verb *pref.*) test, animacy effects are observed only with unaccusative verbs, while for the Genitive of Negation (Gen of Neg), the Locative Inversion (LI) and the First Conjunct Agreement (FCA) test, animacy effects are present for both unaccusative and unergative verb types (few counterexamples to this tendency receive a special treatment in line with the analysis proposed). Animacy effects are absent with objects of transitive verbs and verbs of existence as shown in (6) and (7). Examples similar to (1)-(5) have been partly discussed in the literature (Pesetsky (1982), Babby (2001), Harves (2002) among others) and the effects were analyzed as instances of variable behavior verbs. My observation is that the pattern is not limited to a particular verb class, but extends to all classes of verbs (except verbs of existence) and thus, requires an account in other terms. **Theoretical Background.** Following Reinhart (2002), I assume that theta roles are composed of two binary features: +/-c (Cause of change) and +/-m (Mental state). The value of feature +/-m distinguishes the Experiencer role [-c+m] from Theme [-c-m]. The feature [+m] entails animacy, but not conversely. I further assume that animate subjects of unergative verbs bear a theta role of Agent [+c+m], inanimate subjects of unergative verbs receive a theta role of Instrument [+c-m], inanimate subjects of unaccusative verbs are Themes [-c-m], while animate subjects of unaccusative verbs are Experiencers [-c+m]. I also adopt Reinhart's (2002) idea that maximally one theta role can be assigned internal to the VP. **Analysis.** My initial assumption is that subjects of intransitive verbs may bear one of the theta roles illustrated in (8). This partly correlates with animacy: for example, only animates can be Experiencers. Given the structure in (8), the animacy conflicts in (1) and (2) are the result of the Experiencer/Theme role interaction: the *po*-phrases and the verb *pref.* tests give a grammatical result only if a single argument of the verb is a Theme[-c-m], excluding subjects bearing an Experiencer, Agent or Instrument theta role. The Gen of Neg, LI and FCA diagnostics, as shown in (3)-(5), are restricted to Theme [-c-m] and Instrument [+c-m] arguments, with the exclusion of Experiencers and Agents. Not all animate internal arguments are Experiencers. Certain verbs allow animate Themes on non-agentive reading. These verbs include examples of 'variable behavior' verbs like 'plavat' (swim/float) and 'stojat' (stand/sit) (Pesetsky (1982), Babyonyshev (1996)). Crucially, these verbs pass the Gen of Neg test only on the non-agentive interpretation (float vs. swim; stand vs sit). The last puzzle is the contrast between transitive objects/subjects and unergative subjects. Given that max one theta role can be assigned within a VP (Theme [-c-m] or Instrument [+c-m]), and that inanimate/animate objects of transitive verbs receive a Theme [-c-m] theta role, it follows that transitive subjects [+c+/-m] must always be external, as opposed to subjects of unergative verbs, which can be either internal (Instrument [+c-m]) or external (Agent [+c+m]). This explains why transitive subjects do not pass unaccusativity diagnostics regardless of animacy, while inanimate unergative subjects do, as shown in (3)d, (4)c, (5)d. Thus, it is the theta role specification that matters for the result, but not animacy *per se*. The observation in (6) that verbs of existence show no animacy effects with respect to unaccusativity tests also follows from the analysis in (8). The sole argument of an existence predicate, whether animate or inanimate, is semantically a Theme, not an Experiencer. Thus, these subjects are always internal and show no animacy effects. Unaccusativity is two layered: level 1 is argument structure of the verb, level 2 is a theta role specification of its' arguments. The strong cross-linguistic prediction of the analysis is supported by widespread unergative alternates of unaccusative verbs in Hebrew, Dutch, and German (examples frequently contrast in animacy) reported in Borer (1994), Hoekstra and Mulder (1990), and Reinhart (2000).

- (1) a. Po jabloku upalo s každoga dereva  
po apple fell from each tree  
'An apple fell from each of the trees'  
b.\* Po sportsmenu upalo s každoga trenažera  
po sportman<sub>Dat</sub> fell from each machine  
c.\* Po mysli probežalo v každoi golove  
po thought<sub>Dat</sub> ran in each head.  
d.\* Po malčiku probežalo v každom koridore .  
Po boy<sub>Dat</sub> ran in every hall
- (2) a. Mnogo travy naroslo za vesnu  
A lot of grass na- grew for spring  
'A lot of grass has grown over the spring'  
b.\* Mnogo detei naroslo za vesnu  
Many children na- grew for spring  
c.\* Mnogo holodilnikov narabotalo na kuhne.  
Many fridges na-worked on kitchen  
d.\* Mnogo studentov narabotalo na kafedre  
Many students na-worked at department
- (3) a.?? studentki ne prišlo  
student<sub>Gen</sub> not arrive  
b. otveta iz polka ne prišlo  
answer<sub>Gen</sub> from regiment not come  
c.\* ni odnogo rebenka ne piščalo v komnate  
not single child<sub>Gen</sub> not screamed in room  
d. ni odnogo budilnika ne piščalo v komnate  
not single alarm<sub>Gen</sub> not screamed in room
- (4) a. Na kuhne svistit čajnik  
In kitchen whistles kettle<sub>Sgl</sub>  
b.??V kvartire svistit malčik  
In apartment whistles boy  
c. V sadu rosli rozy  
In garden grew roses  
d.??V semje rosli deti  
In family grew children
- (5) a.\* V prudu utonul Kolja i Vanja  
In pond drowned Kolja and Vanja  
b. V prudu utonul avtomobil i povozka  
In pond drowned car and cart  
c.\* Na večere igral Petja i Vanja  
at party played Petja and Vanja  
d. Na večere igral magnitofon i radio  
at party played player and radio
- (6) a. zdes' horoših ljudei ne suščestvuet  
here good people<sub>Gen</sub> not exist  
b. v gruppah bylo po-učastniku  
in groups were po- participant<sub>Dat</sub>  
c. v derevne byl vrač  
in village was doctor  
d. v etoj derevne pojavilsja vrač i učitel'  
in this village appeared doctor and teacher
- (7) a. My dali každoj tancorše po instruktoru  
we gave each dancer po instructor<sub>Dat</sub>  
b. Instruktora nabrali studentov  
Instructors na-enrolled students  
c. Ja ne vižu moej dočki  
I not see my daughter<sub>Gen</sub>

(8)



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