



The argument structure of long and short form adjectives and participles in Russian

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Received 23 June 2013; received in revised form 24 April 2014; accepted 30 May 2014
Available online 19 July 2014

Abstract

This paper addresses a long-standing problem of argument realization patterns with short and long form adjectives and participles in Russian: long forms can be used in both predicative and attributive positions, but realize their arguments only in adnominal positions, whereas short forms, which are only used in predicative position, do not show any restrictions on argument realization. Despite the fact that adjectives and participles take different types of arguments, they show the same general pattern of argument realization, hence the question that I will try to answer in this paper is of a more general character: what kind of mechanism allows for long form adjectives and participles to express their arguments (whatever they are), but only in adnominal position? I propose a unified account that covers both classes, which is based on the following idea: if a complex modifier headed by a short form is used in adnominal position, the long form affix is necessarily added to this configuration to enable obligatory agreement in Case between a head noun and the modifier. I further argue that in predicative position, there is no reason to allow for a similar derivation due to the absence of Case agreement requirements, which rules out the use of long forms with realized arguments in this position.
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Keywords: Adjective; Participle; Short and long forms; Russian; Argument realization

1. Introduction

This paper discusses and analyzes the distribution and argument realization patterns of long and short forms (henceforth LFs and SFs, respectively) of adjectives and past passive participles in Russian.¹ The problems raised by the syntactic and semantic behavior of long and short forms are well-known and widely discussed in the literature (see Siegel, 1976; Babby, 1975, 1999, 2009; Bailyn, 1994; Schoorlemmer, 1995; Paslawska and von Stechow, 2003; Geist, 2010), but the analyses that have been proposed usually address some isolated issues either for adjectives or for participles and, hence, do not always capture all the relevant facts considered in this paper.

One of the conclusions that seems to have emerged from the literature addressing various aspects of short and long forms in Russian is that SFs behave more like verbal elements, whereas LFs are considered purely adjectival (see Babby, 1975 and elsewhere, Bailyn, 1994; Pereltsvaig, 2001; Geist, 2010, among others). From a typological perspective, this is a well-grounded conclusion, since the class of adjectives is typologically one of the most diverse classes due to the ability

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¹ In this paper, I will only consider past passive participles. Active and present participles behave differently in various respects and will not be analyzed here.

of adjectives to exhibit both nominal and verbal features to a different extent in different languages (see Dixon, 2004). Thus, in Russian adjectives and participles seem to fall into two categories, one of which, namely, SFs, exhibits more verbal features, whereas the other, LFs, has more nominal characteristics. One of the nominal characteristics that I will take particularly seriously in this paper is Case marking, which only LFs (of both adjectives and participles) can display.

The empirical data that I will try to account for are the following. First of all, while both LFs and SFs are allowed in predicative position, only LFs can be used in adnominal position. Secondly, LFs can realize their arguments only in adnominal, but not in predicative position, but SFs do not exhibit any restrictions on argument realization in predicative position. This pattern is common to both adjectives and past passive participles, hence I will try to develop an analysis which is general enough to be extended to both categories. I will focus mainly on the features that unify adjectives and participles, whereas many syntactic and semantic differences that can be drawn between these two categories and the details of their representations will have to be disregarded for the present purposes.

I will argue that the distributional differences between short and long forms are due to a Case agreement requirement that is imposed on adjectival and participial modifiers in adnominal position. Crucially, only LFs can agree in Case, the possibility of Case marking being enabled by a special 'thematic' element *-oj*, which is also a morphological LF marker (see Halle and Matushansky, 2006). This will account for the fact that only Case-marked LFs can be used in adnominal positions.

To capture the argument realization patterns of LFs and SFs, I will introduce a distinction between 'simple' and 'complex' LFs, suggesting that the latter are derived on the basis of SFs and hence can 'inherit' their argument realization properties. The main idea is that when a SF is wanted in an adnominal position, it is forced to inflect for Case. In order to enable Case marking, a LF marker has to be added to a SF, creating thus a complex (i.e., potentially argument-realizing) LF. Predicative position does not impose any Case agreement requirements, so a need to derive a complex LF never arises in this position, and all predicative LFs are therefore simple. Simple LFs will be treated as canonical adjectives derived by an adjectivizing head which merges with a predicative root. To this structure, the LF suffix is added. As proper adjectives, LFs will be able to appear in canonical adjectival positions, i.e., both as nominal modifiers and in predicative position.

The paper is organized as follows. Section 2 gives a data overview and discusses the distribution and argument realization patterns of both long and short forms of adjectives (section 2.1) and past passive participles (section 2.2). I then proceed to discuss some of the most relevant previous analyses of the differences between long and short forms in section 3. In particular, in section 3.1, I will argue against an influential hypothesis first advanced in Babby (1975) and Siegel (1976) that all LFs are attributive, i.e., predicative LFs should be analyzed as modifiers of a null N. In section 4, a proposal will be developed which aims at explaining the observed empirical generalization for both SFs and LFs of adjectives and participles. Section 5 concludes the paper.

2. Data overview

In this section, I will present a set of data that should be taken into consideration by any theory that attempts to account for the distribution and argument realization patterns of long and short forms of participles and adjectives. These data will form the empirical basis for the analysis proposed in this paper. For ease of exposition, adjectives and participles will be presented in different sections, but, as will become apparent by the end of this section, the relevant properties are similar for both classes.

2.1. Short and long forms of adjectives

Many qualitative adjectives in Russian come in two forms, as exemplified in (1).²

(1)	<i>krasivj</i>	<i>krasiv</i>
	beautiful.LF.NOM.SG.MASC.	beautiful.SF.SG.MASC.
	<i>dovol'nyj</i>	<i>dovoln</i>
	content.LF.NOM.SG.MASC.	content.SF.SG.MASC.
	<i>veselyj</i>	<i>vesel</i>
	merry.LF.NOM.SG.MASC.	merry.SF.SG.MASC.

² I will use the following abbreviations: NOM – Nominative, INSTR – Instrumental, DAT – dative, ACC – accusative, SG – singular, PL – plural, MASC – masculine, FEM – feminine, NEUT – neuter, PRES – present, PST – past, INF – infinitive.

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