The Locative Alternation and the Russian ‘empty’ prefixes: A case study of the verb gruzit’ ‘load’*

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Abstract

We present an empirical study to address critical aspects of two theoretical issues, namely the “Locative Alternation” and Russian aspectual “empty” prefixes. Our data, extracted from the Russian National Corpus, represent the behavior of the Russian verb gruzit’ ‘load’, which participates in the Locative Alternation in both its unprefixed (gruzit’) and prefixed forms (nagruzit’, zagruzit’ and pogruzit’). According to Russian linguistic tradition, the prefixes na-, za- and po- forming the prefixed counterparts of the verb gruzit’ ‘load’ are considered semantically “empty”, bearing only the aspectual feature “perfective”. The data on the Locative Alternation was analyzed using a logistic regression model in order to probe for a significant relationship between prefixes and grammatical constructions. Our analysis shows that the four verbs behave differently in terms of the locative constructions they participate in (the Theme-Object construction as in load the hay onto the truck and the Goal-Object construction as in load the truck with hay). While the unprefixed imperfective gruzit’ favors the Theme-Object construction, the addition of a prefix radically changes this distribution, and each prefix does it in a different way: nagruzit’ strongly favors the Goal-Object construction, pogruzit’ uses the Theme-Object construction in a nearly exclusive manner, whereas zagruzit’ creates a near-balance between the two constructions. Our findings support the hypothesis that the Locative Alternation involves both the meaning of the verb and the meaning of its constructions. The three prefixed verbs exhibit statistically significant differences in their behavior, which is at variance with the idea that the prefixes are semantically empty.

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1. Introduction

The present study addresses two theoretical issues, both of which are controversial in the scholarly literature. The first issue is the “Locative Alternation” (John loaded the hay onto the truck vs. John loaded the truck with hay), where an unresolved debate questions whether the most important factor is a) the meaning of the verb, b) the meaning of the construction, or c) the interaction of both the verb and its construction. Russian provides an excellent testing ground for this issue since we can observe the influence of subtle semantic modifications wrought by prefixes on constructions with overt case marking. The second issue is whether semantically “empty” linguistic units exist. Our data represent the behavior of the Russian verb gruzit’ ‘load’, which participates in the Locative Alternation in both its unprefixed and prefixed forms. This verb has three purportedly “empty” prefixes according to traditional definitions, since nagruzit’, zagruzit’ and pogruzit’ are all listed as the perfective “partners” of the unprefixed imperfective gruzit’, and all four verbs come under a single definitional entry (Ozegov and Švedova 2001). Analysis of our data extracted from the Russian National Corpus (www.ruscorpora.ru, henceforth RNC, the source of all examples herein) details the interaction of the verb and construction meanings, supporting hypothesis c) above. Furthermore, since the three prefixed verbs show a significant difference in their distribution of constructions, our data does not support the idea that the prefixes are semantically empty. The rationale is that if the prefixes were semantically empty, they would have to be equivalent, which is not the case. We demonstrate that a verb is not a monolithic unit, since passive participles behave differently from other verb forms. The same “split” applies to the Locative Alternation constructions, which are not uniform and can be represented by their full (see examples 3–5 below) and reduced versions (examples 6–7 below), showing different behavior in terms of reduction. In addition, we find an interesting relationship between the prefixes and the use of prepositions.

Section 2 gives a brief overview of the two theoretical issues, namely the Locative Alternation in 2.1 and the so-called “empty” prefixes in 2.2, situating their relevance to Russian gruzit’ ‘load’ in 2.3. Our objectives include probing the relationship between the unprefixed base verb and its three prefixed perfectives and the role of participles and prepositions in gruzit’ ‘load’ constructions. Our empirical study presented in Section 3 uses the constructional profile, defined in 3.1 to structure the database, which is described in 3.2. In Section 4, the analysis confronts the objec-
tives with the data, presenting our statistical model in 4.1, addressing
the relationship between base and prefixed verbs in 4.2, the behavior of
passive participles in 4.3, reduced constructions in 4.4, and prepositions
in 4.5. Conclusions are offered in Section 5.0.

2. Theoretical issues

Both the Locative Alternation and the role of prefixes in the Russian
aspeсtual system have produced a vast scholarly literature that we cannot
do justice to in this article. Our aim is to survey the highlights of both
issues, picking out the points most relevant to our analysis. This entails
compressing much of the detail, though this carries some risk of over-
simplification.

2.1. The Locative Alternation

The Locative Alternation has been famous in the scholarly literature on
English ever since Fillmore (1968: 47) studied examples like these:

(1) Theme-Object: John loaded the hay onto the truck

vs.

(2) Goal-Object: John loaded the truck with hay.

This phenomenon is observed in many European languages (English,
German, Spanish), where a given verb can occur in two alternative con-
structions, both of which deliver (approximately) the same information.
The Locative Alternation has attracted much attention since it touches
upon “the fundamental question of why a single verb appears in more
than one syntactic frame” (Iwata 2005: 356).

The Locative Alternation has been plagued by terminological diversity.
Particularly problematic is the issue of what to call the two constructions,
since nearly every author offers a different solution. We choose to follow
Brinkmann (1997) and Nichols (2008) in terming the constructions Theme-
Object and Goal-Object as above. This pair of terms makes no theoretical
assumptions and is relatively transparent. The hay item is the theme and
the truck item is the goal, and “object” refers to the direct object, which
is consistently coded with the Accusative case in both constructions in
Russian.

Most of the scholarly work on the Locative Alternation can be grouped
according to the approach as:
Syntactic/lexical (Rappaport and Levin 1988, 2005, 2008; Pinker 1989, 
Levin 1993, Brinkmann 1997; Dowty 2000; Mateu 2001);
Frame (Fillmore 1968, 1977, 2008; Boas 2003, 2006); or
Constructional (Goldberg 1995, 2006; Michaelis and Ruppenhofer 2000, 

In a broad sense, all three approaches can be understood as addressing the 
question of what motivates the Locative Alternation: is it the verb, the 
construction, or both?
The syntactic/lexical approach focuses on the meaning of the verb as 
the crucial factor. The syntactic options are viewed as an epiphenomenon 
of the intrinsic properties of the verb, which can be either “content-oriented” 
or “container-oriented” (Pinker 1989: 125–127). The option of alternation 
is listed in the lexicon and follows from linking rules. The goal is thus to 
determine which sense is basic for each given verb. This approach runs into 
a variety of problems, among them the claim of derivational direction/
complexity (due to the fact that the Goal-Object construction is necessarily 
more complex in a tree-diagram) and the related claim that one of the 
verb senses is more basic than the other (see Boas 2006 for an overview 
and counterexamples). We agree that the meaning of the verb is impor-
tant, but it does not give discrete results. The syntactic/lexical approach 
can classify verbs as alternating or non-alternating, but does not account 
for distributional differences among alternating verbs. We find that alter-
nating verbs can alternate differently, preferring either the Theme-Object 
or the Goal-Object construction to various extents.
The frame approach takes the syntactic construction rather than the verb 
as the point of departure. Boas (2006: 135) describes this as a “splitting” 
approach, where words are defined according to the semantic frames they 
evoke, and a verb like load is split into two lexical units, each of which 
evokes a distinct frame (the Theme-Object or the Goal-Object construc-
tion). Whereas the frame approach highlights the differences between the 
constructions, it is less effective for investigating why a single verb alter-
nates between constructions.
The Russian data additionally present subtle semantic differences among 
gruzit’ and its three perfectives. All four verbs are glossed as ‘load’ (Ožegov 
and Švedova 2001). To some extent, Russian dictionaries regard the pre-
fixed forms under consideration as lexically distinct. All major dictionaries 
single out two basic “senses” of the unprefixed verb gruzit’ ‘load’ 1) ‘fill 
something with freight’ and 2) ‘place the load somewhere’. Both Ožegov 
and Švedova (2001) and Evgen’eva (1999) attribute the first meaning to 
the verb nagruzit’, prefixed in na-, and the second meaning to the verb
pogruzit' prefixed in po-. However, there is no agreement in their judgment of the verb zagruzit': whereas Ožegov and Švedova (2001) group it together with nagruzit' as bearing the first meaning, Evgen'eva (1999) does not treat this verb as an aspectual “partner” of the unprefixed verb gruzit' at all. In Evgen'eva (1999), zagruzit' receives a separate dictionary entry, which in theory contains meanings that characterize this verb as different from other ‘load’ verbs. However, the first meaning that we find on this list is ‘fill something with freight’ and the authors do not provide any comments on whether it differs from the meaning of gruzit' and nagruzit' that is glossed similarly.

The major problem with traditional lexicographic approach is that dictionaries assume that the distinctions between the ‘load’ verbs are unilateral: ideally, each meaning of the unprefixed verb should correspond to only one of the prefixed verbs. As we see, this is definitely not the case with nagruzit' and zagruzit', which, in fact, overlap not only in the basic meaning ‘fill something with freight’ but also in the special meaning ‘load with work’ (Evgen'eva 1999). Furthermore, different dictionaries provide different data: in Ušakov (2009: 704) and Efremova (2006: 772), we find that pogruzit' can also be attributed to meaning 1), namely ‘fill something with freight’.

Summing up the lexicographic description of the Russian ‘load’ verbs, we find two kinds of problems. On the one hand, they do not distinguish between constructions and “lexical meanings” (treating both as “lexical meanings”). On the other hand, they usually assign different meanings of the unprefixed verb (defined intuitively) to different prefixed “partners”, which in reality is not always the case. A corpus study can provide a more solid ground for distinguishing among the ‘load’ verbs, showing which factors and in which proportion describe their behavior.

Thus, in the present article, we take the corpus data as the point of departure and focus mainly on formal factors and how they are associated with verbal semantics. It appears that the prefixes amplify different portions of the meaning of the base verb and this affects the Locative Alternation. Because we observe this tight interplay between lexical meaning and construction frequency, we choose the constructional approach. We follow Goldberg (1995, 2006) in investigating the dynamics between the Russian ‘load’ verbs and the Theme-Object vs. Goal-Object constructions. This approach has two added advantages for our analysis. First, the construction approach allows us to examine the interaction between the Locative Alternation constructions and another construction, namely the passive construction. Second, it allows us to zoom in on variation within the Theme-Object construction, targeting the interaction of prefixes and prep-
2.2. Russian “empty” prefixes

The category of aspect is consistently expressed by Russian verbs, which can have two values: imperfective or perfective. Janda (2007) demonstrates that it is useful to distinguish among four types of perfective verbs in Russian, two of which are pertinent to this article, namely Natural Perfectives, which serve as the aspectual correlates of imperfective verbs with the same lexical meaning, and Specialized Perfectives that behave as separate lexical items. This distinction can be illustrated with the verb that this study focuses on: *gruzit’* ‘load’. *Gruzit’ – nagruzit’, gruzit’ – zagruzit’* and *gruzit’ – pogruzit’* form aspectual pairs, where the first member is an imperfective base verb, and the second is its prefixed Natural Perfective (Ozˇegov and Švedova 2001). Specialized Perfectives like *peregruzit’* ‘overload; transport by ship’ and *dogruzit’* ‘finish loading’ involve prefixes that bring new, additional meaning to the imperfective. By contrast, the Natural Perfectives give an impression that their prefix bears no meaning and thus can be treated as “empty”.

Specialized perfectives can form their own aspectual correlates by means of the suffixes -yva/-iva-, -va- and -a- (*peregruzit’ – peregruzˇat’* ‘overload; transport by ship’). Thus, Russian has two major types of aspectual pairs: 1) unprefixed imperfective verbs and their Natural perfectives, and 2) Specialized perfectives and their suffixal imperfective counterparts. However, this system is further complicated by the fact that many Natural Perfectives can also form suffixal imperfectives, which is also true for the verbs under consideration: *nagruzit’ – nagruzˇat’, zagruzit’ – zagruzˇat’, pogruzit’ – pogružat’*. Functionally, there is no one-to-one correspondence between primary imperfectives like *gruzit’* and secondary imperfectives like *nagruzˇat’*. The relation between the two types of imperfectives is a separate and complex issue in Russian linguistics and depends on many factors.1

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1. Secondary imperfectives favor habitual and iterative contexts more than primary imperfectives (see Veyrenc 1980: 166–169; Apresjan 1995: 112–113); in general, secondary imperfectives are more strongly associated with praesens historicum (Petruxina 2000: 99) and are more often used in metaphorical contexts (Veyrenc 1980: 177). Secondary imperfectives reflect not only the interaction of the verbal stem and the perfectivizing prefix, but also involve one more factor, i.e. the imperfectivizing suffix. In this work we are mostly interested in “empty” prefixes, which leaves secondary imperfectives outside the scope of this study.
The idea of “empty” prefixes, also known as “purely aspectual” (“čistovidovyje”), has a long tradition in Russian linguistics (Šaxmatov 1952; Avilova 1959, 1976; Tixonov 1964, 1998; Forsyth 1970; Vinogradov 1972; Švedova 1980; Čertkova 1996; Zaliznjak and Šmelev 2000; Mironova 2004). The list of “pure aspectual” pairs varies in grammars and dictionaries, but, according to the “Exploring Emptiness” database (description of the database is available in Janda and Nesset forthcoming), there are up to two thousand such pairs used in contemporary Russian. The inventory of “empty” prefixes ranges from sixteen (Švedova et al. 1980) to nineteen items (Krongauz 1998). A noticeable fact about “empty” prefixes is that all these units also form Specialized Perfectives. Usually each base verb chooses one “empty” prefix, but many verbs can occur with two or three prefixes (as in case of gruzit’); the maximum appears to be six prefixes (see the description of mazat’ ‘smear’ in section 2.3).

Some scholars have objected to the concept of “empty” prefixes, claiming that the prefix always retains its meaning (Vey 1952, van Schooneveld 1958, Isačenko 1960, Timberlake 2004: 410–411). Most traditional descriptions of Russian grammar do not mention the fact that some imperfectives form Natural Perfectives with more than one prefix. Those that do note that Natural Perfectives with various prefixes can be slightly differentiated in lexical meaning (Švedova 1980: 588, Čertkova 1996, Glovinskaja 1982), but do not give further information. We join the camp of opponents of the “meaningless” approach and seek to provide new corpus-based evidence that the prefix of a Natural Perfective has semantic content, and, being compatible with the semantics of the base verb, it enhances or focuses certain portions of the latter.

Janda and Nesset (forthcoming) offer two sets of arguments against the “emptiness” of the prefixes. First we see an uneven distribution of prefixes within the class of Natural Perfectives. If the meanings of the prefixes were really empty, we could expect an arbitrary statistical distribution of verbs to prefixes, which is not the case. Second, there is a remarkable isomorphism between the semantic network of Specialized Perfectives that involve “non-empty” uses of a prefix and the semantic network of Natural Perfectives that use the same prefix in an “empty” mode. This suggests that prefixes always remain connected to their meanings, which overlap with the meanings of the verbs in the Natural Perfectives. The present article provides new evidence against the “empty” prefixes. We demonstrate that the choice of prefix for Natural Perfectives in case of gruzit’ (na- vs. za- vs. po-) influences the constructional profile of the verb as it is attested in corpus data.
2.3. Interaction of Locative Alternation and prefixes in Russian

The Locative Alternation is represented by two constructions: Theme-Object and Goal-Object. As noted above, the two constructions differ in which of the participants is marked as the direct object: the theme (i.e. elements like hay), or the goal (i.e. elements like truck). In both constructions the direct object is consistently coded in Russian with the Accusative case, while the other participant can be expressed via different forms.

The Theme-Object construction encodes the goal via a prepositional phrase (usually with prepositions v ‘into’ and na ‘onto’) with a noun in the Accusative case, as illustrated in examples (3) and (4).

(3) Potom s pomosˇ'ju avtokrana predpolagalos' gruzit' brevna na baržu.
[Then with help-INST crane-GEN was-supposed load-INF logs-ACC on barge-ACC.]
‘Then, with the help of the crane, we were supposed to load the logs onto the barge.’

(4) Gruzı vse v mašinu i vezi sjuda.
[Load-IMP everything-ACC into car-ACC and bring-IMP here.] ‘Load everything into the car and bring [it] over here.’

In the Goal-Object construction the other participant is coded by the Instrumental case without a preposition:

(5) On sodrogalsja, slušaja o tom, kak gruzili vagony detskimi trupami.
[He shuddered hearing about how they loaded wagons-ACC childrens’-INST corpses-INST]
‘He shuddered hearing about how they loaded wagons with childrens’ corpses.’

The use of prefixes in Russian presents a challenge for research on the Locative Alternation in that it introduces a more complicated system of alternating verbs. Considering the interaction between prefixes and locative constructions, three groups of alternating verbs can be singled out:

2. Alternatively adverbs like kuda ‘in which direction’ can appear in this slot of the Theme-Object construction, in which case the goal is not explicitly named.
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(a) verbs that can alternate in both unprefixed and prefixed forms (verbs like gruzit’ ‘load’);
(b) verbs that do not alternate when unprefixed but are used in both constructions with certain prefixes (verbs like lit’ ‘pour’, and sypat’ ‘strew, scatter’);
(c) verbs that do not alternate in unprefixed forms and can be used either in Theme-Object or Goal-Object construction depending on the prefix (verbs like stavit ‘put, place’).

The last group is not in our focus since it includes Specialized Perfectives, which are semantically distinct from the imperfective base verb. Hence in this case there is no Locative Alternation as such. For instance, the unprefixed verb stavit ‘put, place’, as well as its Natural Perfective with po- (postavit’), are used in Theme-Object construction while its Specialized Perfectives with za- and ob- choose the Goal-Object construction (zastavit ‘line something with something’; obstavit ‘furnish’).

In group (b) we find Locative Alternation only with a prefix (usually za-): cf. the verb lit’ ‘pour’, which is used only in the Theme-Object construction, and its Specialized Perfective zalit’ ‘fill’, which shows the Locative Alternation (zalit’ benzin-ACC v bak-ACC ‘pour gasoline into the tank’; zalit’ bak-ACC benzinom-INST ‘fill the tank with gasoline’). It appears that in this case the properties of the prefix are more at stake than the properties of the verbal roots. As well as in group (c), the prefixed verbs of this group are Specialized perfectives and thus go beyond the scope of this article. (For a more detailed consideration of this group see Sokolova and Lewandowski forthcoming.)

Our main interest is in the first group of verbs, which alternate in both unprefixed and prefixed forms. This group is limited in Russian to two sets of verbs: gruzit’ ‘load’ and mazat’ ‘smear’ and their Natural Perfectives. The verb gruzit’ has three perfective counterparts, with the prefixes na-, za-, po-, all of which can alternate. The verb mazat’ ‘smear’ has six Natural Perfectives, with the prefixes na-, za-, po-, vy-, iz-, pro-, of which only namazat’ alternates (with a strong preference for the Goal-Object construction).3 Thus, gruzit’ ‘load’ is the only base verb with more or less even dis-

3. It appears that in the case of mazat’ ‘smear’ the properties of the verbal root are more at stake than the properties of the prefixes since the verbal root itself already contains some information about the theme as a substance (note the null-suffixed deverbal noun maz’ ‘grease’; cf. verbs with incorporated participants like saxarit’ ‘sugar’ derived from saxar ‘sugar’ and musorit’ ‘litter’ derived from musor ‘litter’, see Jackendo¤ff 1990; Padučeva 2008: 233–234).
tribution for the Theme-Object and the Goal-Object constructions, where
the Natural Perfectives nagruzit’, zagruzit’ and pogruzit’ can also alternate.
Hence it is the behavior of these verbs that we analyze in this article.

3. Data and methodology

Our empirical study examines the constructional profiles of the Russian
‘load’ verbs as evidenced by data from the Russian National Corpus. We
first define the term “constructional profile” and then describe how our
data was extracted and coded.

3.1. Constructional profiles

Constructional profiles have proven to be an effective method for investi-
gating the synonymy of words, as Janda and Solovyev (2009: 367) demon-
strate in their study of Russian words for ‘happiness’ and ‘sadness’, where
they define the constructional profile of a word as “the frequency distribu-
tion of the constructions that a word appears in”. This frequency distribu-
tion is based on corpus data.

The constructional profile methodology has grown directly out of the
cognitive linguistics tradition, more specifically construction grammar,
and has close relatives both within that tradition and beyond it. In keeping
with construction grammar, constructional profiling recognizes the con-
struction as the relevant unit of linguistic analysis (Goldberg 1995, 2006)
and presumes that speakers are sensitive to the frequency of words in con-
structions (Goldberg 2006: 46, 62). Both Geeraerts (1988) and Divjak and
Gries (Divjak 2006, Divjak and Gries 2006 and Gries and Divjak 2009)
have used corpus data to investigate synonymy, using a wide range of
factors (collocational, morphosyntactic, syntactic, and semantic) in order
to establish behavioral profiles of verbs. Constructional profiles utilize only
the complementation patterning aspect of behavioral profiles, specifically
targeting the range of constructions a word appears in. Since the construc-
tional profile methodology takes the word as the point of departure, it is in
a sense the inverse of the collostructional methodology (Stefanowitsch and
Gries 2003, 2005), which takes the construction as the point of the depart-
ture and asks what words occur in the construction. Beyond the immediate
family of methodologies within cognitive linguistics, constructional profiles
are also related to techniques such as syntactic bootstrapping (Gleitman
and Gillette 1995, Lidz et al. 2001) and the use of syntactic range informa-
tion (Atkins et al. 2003).
To a certain extent, our study is parallel to Colleman and Bernolet (this volume). Accepting the claim that the difference between two abstract constructions grants their occurrence with different kinds of verbs, Colleman and Bernolet show that such a split in distribution should be evident not only at the level of ranges of verbs that can fill the argument roles of the constructions but also at the level of relative frequency with which this occurs. This means that different verbs, as well as different meanings of the same verb, can show different relative frequency distribution across the two constructions.

3.2. Database

According to two dictionaries (Evgen’eva 1999 and Ožegov and Švedova 2001) and a list (Cubberly 1982), the Natural Perfectives of gruzit’ ‘load’ include the three prefixed verbs nagruzit’, zagruzit’ and pogruzit’. For the purpose of this study, we constructed a database based on the Modern subcorpus (1950–2009) of the RNC, which contains 98 million words. We extracted examples from this subcorpus for each of the four verbs (the base verb and its Natural Perfectives). The same procedure was performed for all verb forms and in addition passive participles received a separate mark.

Passive participles represent an interaction between the Locative Alternation constructions and the passive construction, and this interaction has a significant impact on the distribution of the Locative Alternation constructions. The Locative Alternation involves two objects, Theme and Goal, both of which can be in focus. The passive construction restricts the focus to just one participant. Where non-passive forms show a preference for one construction over the other, this preference is further exaggerated in the presence of passive forms (see Section 4.2). Thus, for the purpose of this study we have treated passive participles as a separate factor. This yields 895 non-passive forms and 1025 passive forms, for a grand total of 1920 examples. Table 1 shows the frequencies of these examples broken down according to verbs.

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4. To exclude the author as one more relevant factor, the database was cleaned so that there is only one example for each verb from any single author.
The examples thus accumulated were manually coded for the Locative Alternation constructions as Theme-Object vs. Goal-Object. The breakdown and analysis of these data are presented in 4.2 for the non-passive forms and in 4.3 for the passive forms.

In addition to analyzing the interaction between prefixes and constructions within non-passive and passive forms of the four ‘load’ verbs, we are also taking into account the subtype of the construction, namely whether the construction is represented by its “full” or “reduced” version. In full constructions, both participants (Theme and Goal) are overtly expressed, while in “reduced” constructions, one of the participants is missing. “Reduction” here refers to the omission of one of the arguments, which is not profiled as a direct object. For the Theme-Object construction this is the case when the Goal is omitted, whereas the Goal-Object construction leaves out the Theme. In most cases with an omitted Theme or Goal argument, the missing participant is perceived from the context, as in examples (6) and (7) given below:

(6) No uže v bližajšee vremja ožidaetsja podxod sudov obščim tonnažem 780 tys. tonn. Tol’ko zagruzit’ ugol’ budet problematično, poskol’ku iz-za moroza on prevratilsja v glyby.

[But already in nearest time is-expected arrival of vessels (Goal that is omitted in the following sentence) with total tonnage 780 thousand tonnes. Just load coal-ACC will-be problematic, since due-to frost-GEN it-NOM turned-into into blocks-ACC.]

‘But already very soon we expect the arrival of vessels with total tonnage of 780 thousand tons. Just getting the coal loaded will be problematic since due to the cold it has turned into blocks.’

Table 1. Raw frequencies for the forms of the verb gruzit’ ‘load’ and its Natural Perfectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All non-passive forms</th>
<th>raw frequency</th>
<th>Passive participles</th>
<th>raw frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>gruzit’</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>gružen</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nagruzit’</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>nagružen</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zagruzit’</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>zagružen</td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pogruzit’</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>pogružen</td>
<td>449</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Example (6) illustrates a Theme-Object construction with a missing Goal (the vessels that are mentioned in the previous sentence, where the coal will be loaded), and example (7) illustrates a Goal-Object construction with a missing Theme (the purchases that the wagon is loaded with). Reduced constructions are analyzed in section 4.4.

In the remainder of this article we aggregate data from the full constructions (that name both the theme and the goal) and the reduced constructions.

The reduced constructions frequently involve metaphorical expressions, as in examples (8) and (9), which are parallel to (6) and (7) in structure. Metaphorical uses are a separate and complex issue, and for this reason we do not focus on them in the present article.

(8)  
Ja begom kinulsja domoj i, ne razdevajas’, vkljuc’il komp’juter, zagruzil elektronnuju kartu goroda.  
[I-NOM run-INST threw-self home and, not having-undressed, turned-on computer-ACC, loaded electronic map-ACC town-GEN.]  
‘I raced home and turned on my computer without even taking my coat off and downloaded the electronic map of the town.’

(9)  
On čto-to vdrug zagruzilsja i res’il zagruzit’ svoego predannogo slušatelja.  
[He-NOM somehow suddenly loaded-REFL and decided to-load his-ACC devoted-ACC listener-ACC]  
‘For some reason he suddenly got confused and decided to confuse his devoted listener.’

5. There were five examples where both the theme and goal were missing, and since in such examples it is not always possible to determine which construction is present, these examples were eliminated from further analysis and do not figure in our database. All five examples involved the unprefixed gruzit’ ‘load’.
Example (8) involves the frame of computer use, where the computer is the container, and electronic data are the metaphorical contents that are loaded into the computer. In example (9), human beings serve as the metaphorical containers for information that represents metaphorical contents. The relationship between metaphorical uses and the reduced constructions is mainly significant for the verb zagruzit’, which is further described in Sokolova (forthcoming).

4. Analysis of the Locative Alternation

This study contributes to the ongoing linguistic discussion of what motivates the Locative Alternation by investigating the interaction between the prefixes and the grammatical constructions. First, we look at the relationship between the unprefixed base verb (gruzit’ ‘load’) and its prefixed perfective counterparts (nagruzit’, zagruzit’, pogruzit’) to see what the prefixes contribute to the properties of the verbal root. Furthermore, we address an issue which so far has not received proper attention in scholarly works on the Locative Alternation, i.e. the situation with passive participles which change the focus of the locative construction by placing one of the participants (the agent) off-stage. We show that the distribution of the passive participles between the two constructions represents an interaction between the Locative Alternation constructions and the passive construction. Another issue in focus are reduced constructions, where one of the participants is missing. We show that the two constructions behave differently in terms of reduction. Finally, we zoom in on variation within the Theme-Object construction, revealing the interaction of prefixes and prepositions. The data show that the prefix na- targets the preposition na ‘onto’ while other prefixes favor the preposition v ‘into’.

4.1. Binary regression model

The data on the Locative Alternation was analyzed using a logistic regression model in order to probe for a significant relationship between prefixes and grammatical constructions. All calculations were carried out using the “R” software package (http://cran.at.r-project.org), glm, lrm and anova functions (this strategy is modeled after Baayen 2008, Gries 2009).

6. The authors are indebted to an anonymous reviewer for suggesting the use of this method with our data.
Our hypothesis that underlies the model is that three factors, namely
1) prefixes, 2) the number of participants in a frame and 3) the finite/
participle form of a verb (as well as their interaction) contribute to the
choice of either the Theme-Object or the Goal-Object construction. Thus,
there are three independent nominal variables in the model:
1) VERB, having four levels: “Ø” (“zero” for gruzit’), “na” (for nagruzit’),
“za” (for zaruzit’) and “po” (for pogruzit’);
2) REDUCED, having two levels: “yes” (for the reduced constructions,
where one of the participants is missing) and “no”;
3) PARTICIPLE, also having two levels: “yes” and “no”.

One dependent nominal variable CONSTRUCTION has two levels: “theme”
and “goal”. The null hypothesis, $H_0$, suggests that the frequencies of the
Theme-Object or the Goal-Object constructions are independent of the
VERB, REDUCED, PARTICIPLE variables and their pairwise interactions.

The minimal adequate model retains all the independent variables as
main effects, plus the interaction between VERB and PARTICIPLE. As shown
below, the unprefixed verb gruzit’ and its Natural perfective pogruzit’
favor the Theme-Object construction, while nagruzit’ and zagruzit’ prefer
the Goal-Object construction. The statistical test also detected that passive
particiles contribute to the choice of the construction. Finally, reduced
frames favor the Goal-Object construction while full frames are used
mainly in the Theme-Object construction.

Logistic regression shows that there is a highly significant correlation
between the factors mentioned above and the choice of construction: LL-
ratio $\chi^2$ (the difference between the two deviance values, with and without
predictors) is 1738.47, Nagelkerke’s $R^2$ (correlational strength) is 0.796,
$C$ value (the coefficient of concordance which according to Gries (2009)
should ideally be .8 or higher) is 0.964, Somer’s $D_{xy}$ (rank correlation
between predicted and observed responses) is 0.928, $df = 8$, overall $p$ is 0.
The optimal model has high classificatory power: 88.5% constructions are
predicted correctly.

The odds ratio, 95%-CI and $p$ for the significant predictors VERB,
REDUCED, PARTICIPLE, and VERB:PARTICIPLE are shown in Table 2:
In the next few sections we discuss each factor in more detail.

4.2. The verb *gruzit’* ‘load’ and its Natural Perfectives

Table 3 shows the distribution of the non-passive forms of *gruzit’* ‘load’ and its Natural Perfectives across the two constructions of the Locative Alternation. Figure 1 presents the same distribution graphically in terms of relative frequency.

According to our model, the variable **verb** has a strong effect ($\chi^2 = 341.52, p < 2.2e-1$). On Figure 1, we see clear differences among the four ‘load’ verbs. The base imperfective *gruzit’* strongly prefers the Theme-Object construction. The *na* prefixed perfective is nearly the mirror image, preferring the Goal-Object construction. This preference of *nagruzit’* for

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Odds ratio</th>
<th>95%-Confidence Interval</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>verb na</td>
<td>0.097</td>
<td>5.928746e-02</td>
<td>&lt;2e-16 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>verb po</td>
<td>79.888</td>
<td>1.744470e+01</td>
<td>1.49e-05 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>verb za</td>
<td>0.289</td>
<td>1.951300e-01</td>
<td>3.68e-10 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reducedyes</td>
<td>0.411</td>
<td>2.907612e-01</td>
<td>3.67e-07 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>participleyes</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td>1.450705e-04</td>
<td>4.66e-09 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>verb na:participleyes</td>
<td>5.881</td>
<td>2.244183e-01</td>
<td>0.219043 ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>verb po:participleyes</td>
<td>289.170</td>
<td>9.203405e+00</td>
<td>0.000373 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>verb za:participleyes</td>
<td>24.057</td>
<td>4.314377e+00</td>
<td>0.003034 **</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Statistical significance of the independent variables and their interactions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Odds ratio</th>
<th>95%-Confidence Interval</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>verb na</td>
<td>0.097</td>
<td>5.928746e-02</td>
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<td>verb za:participleyes</td>
<td>24.057</td>
<td>4.314377e+00</td>
<td>0.003034 **</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Locative Alternation among non-passive forms of *gruzit’* ‘load’ and its Natural Perfectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Theme-Object constructions</th>
<th>Goal-Object constructions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>raw frequency</td>
<td>relative frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gruzit’</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>72.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nagruzit’</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>23.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zagruzit’</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>45.19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pogruzit’</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>99.61%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
focusing on the goal may have to do with the surface meaning of na-, which corresponds to the meaning of the corresponding preposition na ‘onto’ (which this verb also shows a strong predilection for, see section 4.3). Zagruzit’ shows an almost even distribution across the two constructions, whereas pogruzit’ is almost exclusively restricted to the Theme-Object construction, suggesting a focus on the Theme that is loaded rather than the place where the load ends up.

Given that the perfective verb pogruzit’ shows the same focus (i.e. on the Theme) as the unprefixed verb gruzit’, pogruzit’ might seem to be the most natural perfective counterpart of gruzit’. However, the fact that the Goal-Object construction constitutes 27% of the total number of uses of gruzit’ prevents us from making such conclusions. Pogruzit’ is a natural perfective counterpart of gruzit’ but only for the Theme-Object construction. Moreover, gruzit’ and pogruzit’ behave differently in terms of grammatical forms and reduction (see sections 4.3 and 4.4).

This finding is striking given that all three perfectives are traditionally considered to bear semantically “empty” prefixes. If the three prefixes were indeed empty, we would expect no effect, or at the very least, an identical effect across the three perfectives, i.e. a random distribution. Here, instead,

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7. Zagruzit’ is the only verb that shows an almost even distribution across the two constructions. A more elaborate analysis of the examples indicates that this could be due to the number of additional metaphorical uses that this verb acquires in the Goal-Object construction. Of the three prefixed counterparts to the verb gruzit’ ‘load’, zagruzit’ is more often used metaphorically: zagruzit’ is characterized by 39% of metaphorical uses, while nagruzit’ and pogruzit’ have 25% and 11% respectively (see Sokolova and Lewandowski 2010, Sokolova forthcoming).
we find that the three prefixed verbs behave very differently both from
the unprefixed imperfective and from each other. We take this as strong
evidence against the traditional “empty” prefix hypothesis, since a zero
should have no effect, and we cannot countenance three “different” zeroes.
As we see below in 4.3, the trends that are evident in the prefixed non-
passive forms are even more pronounced in the passive forms.

4.3. Passive participles

Passive participles are used in passive constructions, and here we see an
interaction between the two Locative Alternation constructions and the
passive construction, as illustrated in examples (8) and (9). The Theme-
Object construction has the Theme as the grammatical subject (10), whereas
the Goal-Object construction has the Goal as the grammatical subject
(11). Whichever item is the grammatical subject is thus strongly profiled,
and the agent can be omitted altogether, as we see in both examples.

(10) K dvum časam vse vešči byli vyneseny na ulicu i pogruženy
v avtomobil’.

[Toward two hours-DAT all things-NOM were carried onto street-
ACC and loaded into automobile-ACC.]
‘Towards two o’clock all the things were carried out into the street
and loaded into the automobile.’

(11) Pervyj tanker byl zagružen v prisutstvii prezidentov Putina i
Nazarbaeva.

[First tanker-NOM was loaded in presence-LOC presidents Putin
and Nazarbaev-GEN.]
‘The first tanker was loaded in the presence of presidents Putin and
Nazarbaev.’

Table 4 provides the Locative Alternation data for the passive participles
of the ‘load’ verbs. Figure 2 visually presents the same data together with
the relative frequencies of non-passive forms for comparison.

Whereas pogružen retains its nearly exclusive preference for the Theme-
Object construction, all other passive participles have a nearly exclusive
preference for the Goal-Object construction. If we look at Figure 2, it may
appear that the participles gruzhen, nagružen, zagružen behave virtually
identically. However, they take different objects for the Theme and the
Goal and also show different metaphorical representations. For instance,
if we compare the metaphorical use of the participles gruzhen, nagružen,
we find that gružen is hardly ever used metaphorically (2 examples out of 107, about 2%), for nagružen metaphorical contexts constitute about 22% (48 out of 221 total), while zagružen is characterized by almost 80% metaphorical contexts (176 out of 248).

Not only do participles with different prefixes show different distribution of metaphorical expressions but also the Theme and the Goal in those expressions are represented differently. One of the most frequent Theme + Goal combinations for zagružen is WORK + HUMAN, where the human being serves as a metaphorical CONTAINER for work that represents metaphorical CONTENTS (example (12)):
(12) *Vsju nedelju Ilja byl zagružen delami*

[All week Ilja-NOM was loaded works-INS]

‘The whole week Ilja was overloaded with work’

Such contexts exclude the use of *nagružen* (no such examples were attested in the corpus). On the other hand, only the participle *nagružen* can refer to words as a metaphorical container and meaning as their metaphorical contents (example 13).

(13) *V russkom jazyke nekotorye slova nagruzheny negativnym smyslom*

[In Russian language some words-NOM are loaded negative meaning-INS]

‘In Russian some words are loaded with negative meaning’

The participle variable demonstrates a significant effect ($\chi^2 = 217.58$, $p < 2.2e-1$) and at least part of the interaction between verb and participle (for prefixes *po-* and *za*) is significant as well ($\chi^2 = 21.5$, $p = 8.284e-05$, see also Table 2). Our analysis shows that the overall distribution of various constructions within each verb is also dependent on the distribution of grammatical forms within this verb. The frequency of the grammatical form (in our case of the passive participles) is dependent on the verb (for more details see Janda and Lyashevskaya forthcoming). Some of our verbs show a higher relative frequency of passive participles: for instance, the proportion of non-passive forms to passive forms for the unprefixed verb *gruzit’* is almost 3:1 (286 vs. 107 examples); the verbs *nagruzit’* and *zagruzit’* show an almost even distribution of non-passive and passive forms (1:1.5 and 1:1.2 respectively), while the proportion of the same forms for the verb *pogruzit’* is 1:2 (254 vs. 449 examples).

As can be seen from Figure 2, passive participles have the effect of increasing the relative frequency of the construction that is associated with a given verb. For instance, the distribution of the Theme-Object and Goal-Object constructions with non-passive forms of the verb *nagruzit’* is 23% vs. 77%. For passive forms, the same proportion is 0.5% to 99.5%, significantly increasing the number of examples with the Goal-Object construction. The same effect is attested for the verb *zagruzit’*: the non-passive and passive forms are characterized by a relatively even distribution between the constructions (45% of the Theme-Object constructions vs. 55% of the Goal-Object constructions), while 4.4% passive forms take the Theme-Object constructions and 95.6% take the Goal-Object constructions.
Since passive forms contribute significantly to the overall distribution of the two constructions, the interaction between VERB and PARTICIPLE becomes significant for pogruzit‘ ($p = 0.000373$) and zagruzit‘ ($p = 0.003034$). As a main effect, PARTICIPLE overestimates the probability of the Goal-Object construction because the two other verbs, gruzit‘ and nagruzit‘, have only one case of the Theme-Object construction with passive forms each. The inclusion of the interaction between VERB and PARTICIPLE more accurately represents this effect in the model.

Thus the passive participles boost the frequency of the construction that is more frequent for non-passive forms. The only exception is the unprefixed verb gruzit‘, where passive participles change the preference for the construction from the Theme-Object to the Goal-Object. This distribution is the result of general tendencies within the Russian grammatical system, where passive participles are usually formed exclusively from perfective verbs. In those cases where imperfective verbs are characterized by a high frequency of passive participles, they basically perform the function of adjectives: cf. kopčenyj ‘smoked’ as in kopčenaja ryba ‘smoked fish’, solenyj ‘salted’ (solenye ogurcy ‘pickles’, literally ‘salted cucumbers’), žarenýj ‘fried’ (žarenoe mjaso ‘fried meat’). Passive forms of the verb gruzit‘ constitute only $\frac{1}{4}$ of the data and in the majority of cases characterize the state of the Goal, as in example (14):

(14) My vozvraščalis’. Navstreču dvigalis’ tjaželo gruzˇennye mašiny.
[We were-going-back. Towards were-moving heavily loaded cars-NOM]

‘We were going back. Heavily loaded cars were moving towards us’

In example (14), the participle basically loses its connection with the loading event and mainly refers to the state of the cars, i.e. being heavy.

Thus, the distribution of constructions appears to depend on grammatical forms. Furthermore, as we illustrate in the following section, constructions are sensitive to reduction.

4.4. Reduced constructions

“Reduced constructions” overtly express the participant profiled as the direct object, while omitting the other participant. The tables below provide the frequencies for the reduced structures with non-passive (Table 5) and passive forms (Table 6) of the verb gruzit‘ ‘load’ and its Natural Perfectives. The same data is made more explicit in Figures 3 and 4.
Table 5. The distribution of reduced structures with non-passive forms of the verb *gruzit’* ‘load’ and its Natural Perfectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Full constructions</th>
<th>Reduced constructions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Theme-Object</td>
<td>Goal-Object</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All non-passive forms</td>
<td>137 81% 32 19%</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>gruzit’</em></td>
<td>27 28% 70 72%</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>zagruzit’</em></td>
<td>64 51% 62 49%</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>pogruzit’</em> 8</td>
<td>207 100% 0 0%</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6. The distribution of reduced structures with passive forms of the verb *gruzit’* ‘load’ and its Natural Perfectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Full constructions</th>
<th>Reduced constructions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Theme-Object</td>
<td>Goal-Object</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive forms</td>
<td>1 1% 90 99%</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>gruzen</em></td>
<td>1 0.7% 134 99.3%</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>zagruzten</em></td>
<td>6 6% 95 94%</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>pogruzten</em></td>
<td>427 100% 0 0%</td>
<td>427</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. The diagram does not include the verb *pogruzit’* since it is almost never attested in the Goal-Object construction and the interaction between reduction and the construction does not seem to be relevant.
The reduced variable has a significant correlation with the choice of the construction ($\chi^2 = 26.8, p = 2.257e-07$). As can be seen from Figure 3, the Goal-Object construction shows a higher frequency with reduced constructions: about 20% higher for *gruzit’* and *nagruzit’* and 14% higher for *zagruzit’*. This proportion illustrates that the two constructions behave differently in terms of reduction. Furthermore, the only contexts where the verb *pogruzit’* is attested in the Goal-Object construction are reduced structures, as illustrated by example (15):

*Figure 3. The distribution of reduced structures with non-passive forms of the verb *gruzit’* ‘load’ and its Natural Perfectives*

*Figure 4. The distribution of reduced structures with passive forms of the verb *gruzit’* ‘load’ and its Natural Perfectives*
The car, represented as a direct object, is the Goal in the construction since the following context specifies that the car contains the tools, which are the Theme.

One more important difference between the Theme-Object and the Goal-Object constructions in terms of their relation to reduction is that the quality of reduced structures in the two constructions appears to be different. In examples (6) and (7), the missing component is mentioned in the previous context and thus can be treated as an instance of ellipsis. Such cases are attested for both the Theme-Object and the Goal-Object construction. Yet, the Goal-Object construction is also characterized by cases where reduction interacts with metaphor. The major metaphorical extensions involve a "person" (Goal), who serves as the metaphorical CONTAINER, and "information" or "work" (Theme), which represents metaphorical CONTENTS, as shown in example (9) above and examples (16)–(17) below:

(16)  A ty, Volodin, nas togda nagruzil pro vnutrennego prokurora.

[And you-NOM, Volodin-NOM, us-ACC then loaded about internal prosecutor-ACC.]  

‘And you, Volodin, completely confused us then concerning the internal prosecutor.’

(17)  Koroče, on nagruzil artistov tak, čto v itoge my snjali xoroshee kino.

[In-short, he-NOM loaded artists-ACC so, that in end we shot good-ACC film-ACC] 

‘In short, he stressed the artists so much that we ended up shooting a good film.’

In example (16), a human being (the listener) serves as the metaphorical CONTAINER for information that represents metaphorical CONTENTS. Analogously, in (17), the human beings (the artists) are loaded with work. Such contexts should be distinguished from cases of ellipsis since the omission of the second participant is highly conventionalized. In Fillmore’s terminology, sentences like (16) and (17) can be treated as “definite null instantiations” of the Theme, when a participant is consistently omitted and is
not mentioned in the preceding context, but is known to the speaker and the hearer (Fillmore 2008).

The Theme-Object constructions can also involve both metaphor and reduction, but such structures are less frequent than the Goal-Object construction and the missing component is usually present in the previous context (see example (8)):

(8) *Ja begom kinulsja domoj i, ne razdevajas', vkljuc’/l kompjuter* (the Goal that is further omitted), *zagruzil elektronnuju kartu goroda.*

[I-NOM run-INST threw-self home and, not having-undressed, turned-on computer-ACC, loaded electronic map-ACC town-GEN.]

‘I raced home and turned on my computer without even taking my coat off and downloaded the electronic map of the town.’

In addition to the three correlations discussed above (between the construction and such factors as the verb, the grammatical form and reduction), our data also shows a correlation between the prefix and prepositions. This correlation can be attested only in the full version of the Theme-Object construction, for which reason we did not include it into our regression model. The next subsection examines the role of prepositions in more detail.

4.5. Prepositions

As discussed above, the non-passive forms of *nagruzit’* strongly prefer the Goal-Object construction, and there might be a connection here between the surface meaning of the prefix *na*- and its etymological cousin, the preposition *na* ‘onto’. The focus on surfaces suggests a focus on locations (goals) as opposed to goods (themes) that are loaded on them. Because prepositions are used only in the Theme-Object construction, all data in this subsection pertains only to that construction.

Table 7 shows the distribution of prepositions that occur in the Theme-Object construction. The right-most column in Table 7, marked “no preposition”, aggregates a variety of types of data, since the path of the Theme can alternatively be marked by various adverbs or omitted altogether. Figure 5 presents the same data in terms of percentages (ignoring the uses without a preposition) graphically.

In order to probe for a significant relationship between prefixes and prepositions, the data in Table 7 was analyzed using $\chi^2$-test, excluding the “no preposition” column, which is heterogeneous and thus not strictly comparable to the data in the other two columns. A $\chi^2$-test comparing the
distribution of frequencies yields a value of 59.8343 (df = 3, \( p = 6.377 \times 10^{-13} \)), suggesting an association between the choice of the prefix and the choice of the preposition. To measure the effect size of the \( \chi^2 \) values, Cramer’s V was used, where 0.1 is a small size, 0.3 is a moderate size, and 0.5 is a large size (Cohen 1998: 215–271; King and Minium 2008: 327–330). In our case, the effect size measured by Cramer’s V is 0.38, thus registering between a moderate and a large effect.

The imperfective base verb gruzit’ ‘load’ has no preference with regard to the prepositions na ‘onto’ and v ‘into’. Nagruzit’ attracts the preposition na ‘onto’, while both zagruzit’ and pogruzit’ follow the opposite trend, attracting the preposition v ‘into’. It appears that the choice of the preposition in the Theme-Object construction depends on whether the goal is understood as a surface (na ‘onto’) or as a container (v ‘into’). The association of the na- prefixed verb with the preposition na makes sense,
since the preposition and the prefix have inherited a meaning that refers to a surface, cf. the verb *nadet’* ‘put on (clothing)’ and the phrase *na stol* ‘onto the table’. This connection is palpable also in examples like (17):

(17) *Na teležku nagražili celuju goru jaščikov, čemodanov i meškov.*

[Onto cart-ACC loaded whole mountain-ACC boxes, suitcases and bags-GEN.]

‘[They] loaded a whole mountain of boxes, suitcases and bags onto the cart.’

*Zagruzit’* and *pogruzit’, on the other hand, strongly prefer the preposition *v* ‘into’, where the goal is conceptualized as a container, as in (18) and (19).9

(18) *Krome togo, v mašinu zagruzili ogromnyj rjukzak s paraplanom, paru kanistr, vešči, instrument i koe-kakiju meloč’.*

[Beside that-GEN, into car-ACC loaded huge backpack-ACC with paraglider-INST, pair-ACC canister-GEN, things-ACC, instrument-ACC and various trifles-ACC.]

‘In addition [they] loaded a huge backpack with a paraglider, a couple of canisters, things, an instrument and various trifles into the car.’

(19) *Pogruziv s pomosč’ju šofera v mašinu svoj vešči, Tamara vsju dorogo do goroda prodremla.*

[Having-loaded with help-INST driver-GEN into car-ACC own things-ACC, Tamara-NOM whole way-ACC to town-GEN slept.]

‘Having loaded her things into the car with the driver’s help, Tamara slept all the way to town.’

9. In the case of *zagruzit’*, this preference may be due to a parallelism between the preposition *v* ‘into’ and the preposition *za* ‘beyond’, both of which can refer to crossing the boundary of a container. In the case of *pogruzit’*, the preference for *v* ‘into’ may be explained by the presence of some examples that continue the original meaning of this verb as ‘sink, plunge’, from which the ‘load’ meaning is historically derived via metonymy (since barges sink when loaded, cf. Nichols 2008). These are, however, speculative remarks that will need further study.
5. Conclusions

The constructional profiles of the four Russian ‘load’ verbs, *gruzit’*, *nagruzit’*, *zagruzit’*, and *pogruzit’* are distinct: logistic regression shows that there is a highly significant correlation between the verb and the choice of the construction. This finding supports the theoretical hypothesis that the meanings of words and constructions interact, as suggested by the constructional approach to the Locative Alternation. The syntactic/lexical-semantic approach cannot account for the observed variation among verbs, since it can only recognize verbs as having the alternation or lacking it. The frame approach would constrain us to treating each of the ‘load’ verbs as a pair of homonyms, and again we would lose sight of the differences in variation.

The unprefixed imperfective *gruzit’* favors the Theme-Object construction. The addition of a prefix radically changes this distribution, each in a different way: *nagruzit’* strongly favors the Goal-Object construction, *zagruzit’* creates a near-balance between the two constructions, whereas *pogruzit’* uses the Theme-Object construction in a nearly exclusive manner. This finding contradicts the traditional assumption that the prefixes *na-*, *za-*, and *po-* function as semantic zeroes in forming perfective partner verbs from *gruzit’*. If the prefixes were zeroes, they should follow a random distribution (since they all perfectivize the verb).

The observation of three distinct effects indicates that the prefixes are not devoid of meaning. There is, however, a way to reconcile this finding with the traditional understanding of “purely aspectual” prefixes if we recognize the effect of the prefixes as semantic overlap rather than merely addition. Because the meanings of the prefixes and the verb overlap, there is an illusion of emptiness (cf. Janda and Nesset forthcoming). Our data show that even these overlaps result in dramatic differences in the constructional profiles of the resulting perfectives.

Furthermore, there appears to be an interaction between the two Locative Alternation constructions and the passive construction. The past passive participles largely suppress the Locative Alternation, using the Goal-Object construction, except in the case of *pogruzit’*, where the nearly exclusive preference for the Theme-Object construction remains. A possible explanation of this distribution is that passive participles boost the frequency of the main construction associated with the verb (Goal-Object for *nagruzit’* and *zagruzit’*, and Theme-Object for *pogruzit’*), perhaps due to the focus of attention on the patient. The unprefixed verb *gruzit’*, where
passive participles change the preference from the Theme-Object to the
goal-Object construction, appears to be an exception caused by the
general tendencies within the Russian grammatical system. In Russian,
passive participles are formed primarily from perfective verbs. When
formed from imperfective verbs, participles usually perform the function
of adjectives, which in the case of gruzit' characterize the state of the goal.
This finding requires further investigation on a larger number of verbs.

Both Theme-Object and Goal-Object constructions can be represented
via reduced versions, where the former omits the Goal and the latter omits
the Theme. Our model also shows that there is a correlation between
the construction and its full or reduced version: reduced frames favor the
goal-Object construction, while full frames are used mainly in the Theme-
Object construction. The interaction between the Goal-Object construc-
tion and reduction is supported by two observations: on the one hand,
the Goal-Object construction shows a higher frequency with reduced con-
structions for the verbs gruzit', nagruzit' and zagruzit'; on the other hand,
reduced structures are the only contexts where the verb pogruzit' is
attested in the Goal-Object construction. One more important difference
between the Theme-Object and the Goal-Object constructions in terms of
their relation to reduction is that the quality of reduced structures in the
two constructions appears to be different: in the case of the Theme-Object
construction, we mostly deal with ellipsis, where the missing component is
mentioned in the previous context, while the Goal-Object construction is
also characterized by conventionalized reduced contexts, where reduction
interacts with metaphor. The major metaphorical extensions here involve
a “person” (Goal), who serves as the metaphorical container, and “infor-
mation” or “duties” (Theme), which represent metaphorical contents.
This topic merits further research.

Within the Theme-Object construction, we find an interesting distribu-
tion of prepositions. Whereas the unprefixed imperfective gruzit' shows a
three-way split among use of the preposition na ‘onto’, v ‘into’ and no
preposition, the prefixed perfectives have strong preferences. The prefix
na- in nagruzit' prefers its etymological cousin na ‘onto’, but both za- and
po- prefer v ‘into’. It may be that nagruzit' is primarily used with goals
that are understood as surfaces, whereas zagruzit' and pogruzit' tend to
select for goals that are understood as containers. However, there is
considerable variation here and this topic can also be taken up in future
work.
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