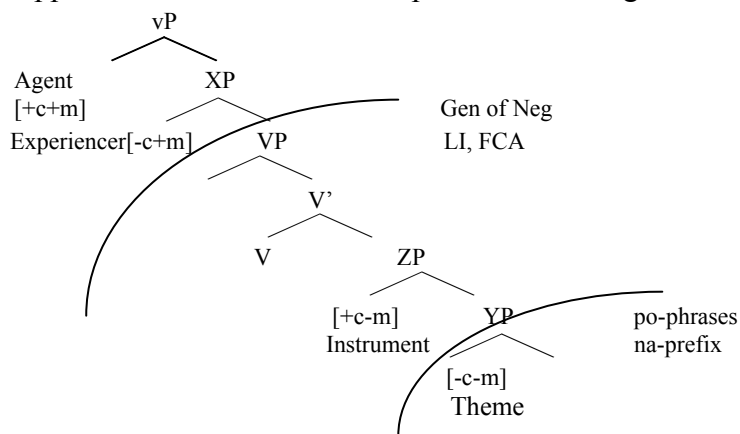


Basic Problem. Unaccusativity in Russian has received a substantial amount of attention in the literature (Babby (1980), Pesetsky (1982), Babyonyshev (1996), Borik (1995), Harves (2002) among others). A number of diagnostics have been discovered to distinguish between the two types of intransitive verbs in Russian. In this paper, I will argue that animacy is an important piece to unaccusativity in Russian 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 Gen of Neg, the Locative Inversion (LI) and the Fist Conjunct Agreement (FCA) test, animacy effects are present for both unaccusative and unergative verb types. Animacy effects are absent with objects of transitive verbs and verbs of existence as shown in (6) and (7). **Theoretical Background.** Following Reinhart (2002), I assume that theta roles are composed of two binary features: +/-c (Cause change) and +/-m (Mental state). The value of feature +/-m distinguishes the Experiencer role [-c+m] from Theme [-c-m]. I 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 assume that Max 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), 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]. The Gen of Neg, LI and FCA diagnostics, as shown in (3)-(5), are restricted to Theme [-c-m] and Instrument [+c-m] arguments, and exclude 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]), inanimate/animate objects of transitive verbs receive a Theme [-c-m] theta role and thus pass the unaccusativity diagnostics regardless of animacy ((7)a-c). 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 (7d), 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). Given that subjects of existential verbs can be generated only internal to the VP (Pesetsky, 1982), animate subjects receive a Theme [-c-m] theta role in this case and thus are exempt from animacy effects. 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 každogo dereva
 po apple fell from each tree
 ‘An apple fell from each of the trees’
 b.* Po sportsmenu upalo s každogo trenažera
 po sportman_{Dat} fell from each machine
 c.* Po mysli probežalo v každoi golove
 po thought_{Dat} ran in each head.
 d.??Po malčiku probežalo v každom koridore .
 Po boy_{Dat} 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_{Gen} not arrive
 b. Otveta iz polka ne prišlo
 answer_{Gen} from regiment not come
- (6) a. Zdes’ horoših ljudei ne suščestvuet
 here good people_{Gen} not exist
 b. V gruppah bylo po-učastniku
 in groups were po- participant_{Dat}
 c. V derevne byl vrač
 in village was doctor
 d. V etoj derevne pojavilsja vrač i učitel’
 in this village appeared doctor and teacher
- (4) a. Na kuhne svistit čajnik
 In kitchen whistles kettle_{Sgl}
 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
- (7) a. My dali každoj tancorše po instruktoru
 we gave each dancer po instructor_{Dat}
 b. Instruktora nabrali studentov
 Instructors na-enrolled students
 c. Ja ne vižu moej dočki
 I not see my daughter_{Gen}
 d.*Po studentu pokupalo každuju knigu
 po student_{Dat}bought each book

(8)



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