SPATIAL CONFIGURATIONS, DEIXIS
AND APARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS IN RUSSIAN

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1. Introduction

The study of apartment descriptions in a number of languages has provided interesting information for the study of both linguistic structures at a textual level as well as for spatial semantics. Early studies of apartment descriptions (Linde and Labov 1975) showed them to be rule-governed texts which adhere to relatively strict set of possible structures, analogous to narrative texts both in terms of their internal structures themselves as well as in the systemacity of these structures. Furthermore, a number of studies have shown the role of deixis, and of transferred deixis, in such spatial descriptions as apartment descriptions (Ullmer-Ehrich 1982) as well as route directions (Klein 1982, 1983; Wunderlich and Reinelt 1982). The apartment texts exemplify an adaptation of three-dimensional space into linear verbal narratives, illustrating the use of secondary deictics in providing conceptual links between the spatial configurations and the discourse. Previously unstudied in Russian, they pose interesting questions in that Russian does not have deictic motion verbs. Rather, deictic spatial relations such as come/go are signaled by a system of prefixed verbs and prepositions.

The body of the paper is divided into three main sections. The first of these briefly introduces the notions of deixis and hidden deixis and discusses their relation to the study of spatial semantics. It is followed by a section which considers the linguistic encoding of spatial configurations in Russian by means of a system of spatial prefixes, focusing on a subset of those prefixes. The final section addresses the use of spatial prefixes and deixis in apartment descriptions.

2. Deixis and space

By deixis here I follow Fillmore’s (1975: 38) definition of deixis as "the name of those formal properties of utterances which are determined by knowing certain aspects of the communicative acts in which the utterances in question can play a role: Identity of interlocutors (person deixis); their locations (place deixis); time at which the communicative act takes place (sending and receiving time): The matrix of the linguistic material within which the utterance has a role (discourse deixis), and the social relationships of speaker and hearer (social deixis)." It is important to keep in mind that deictics can only be understood in conjunction with the speech setting. Deixis specifically has to do with the ways sentences are anchored to their contexts.
of utterance, including such information about the participants as their roles in the speech event, and their spatial, temporal and social locations.

Deictic utterances are grounded to a spatio-temporal reference point, which Lyons (1977) terms the zero-point. Different linguists use different terminology for this zero-point. Following Bühler (1934), Klein (1983) calls it the origo, while Fillmore tends to use the term deictic center; I will use the two interchangeably. In Russian, as in English, the unmarked spatial zero-point is the speaker's location, and the temporal zero-point is the moment of utterance, and the person zero-point the speaker him/herself. Therefore, the deictic center of any utterance will be understood to be the intersection of the temporal, spatial and person zero-points, and the unmarked deictic center is the speaker and the speaker's location at the moment of utterance. Thus one implicit and crucial claim is that the speech event is essentially egocentric.¹

The deictic field is a frame of reference which includes the origo; in the study of spatial deixis it involves a spatial deictic field, where it is the physical location of the origo which is relevant. In many instances of actual language use the deictic center can be shifted: It is shifted to some point other than the default ego-center to signal what I will call perspective: A different perspective can be introduced by using a basically deictic expression in such a way that someone other than the speaker counts as the 'center' of the deictic field. "Canonical" or primary spatial deictics such as here and there, or this and that, constitute a special group of locating terms whose frame of reference can be determined only with regard to the speech situation. Not only is the exact physical location of that place denoted by here dependent on the location of the speech act, but so is the determination of the boundary between here and there. These expressions relate space to the location of the speaker or some reference point at the moment of utterance. They are used as linguistic indices to the spatial coordinates of the speech situation and may be accompanied by gestures.

In addition to such primary spatial deictic oppositions as here versus there, or come versus go, there is a range of spatial expressions which may be used deictically when their interpretation can be determined only with reference to a deictic center or origo. This group, the secondary spatial deictics (e.g. left, right, in front of behind) locates objects or beings with reference to the speaker's location or some established reference point. Such secondary deictics (or what Fillmore (1982: 37) calls "deictics by default" and Herskovits (1986: 3) calls "hidden indexicals") are not "defining elements of communication as such" (Ullmer-Ehrich 1982: 228). But the context is necessary in interpreting the use of these secondary deictics: They are used to locate something (a figure) with relation to something else (the ground), and it is in this relation that the position of an observer is crucial, as well as the position of other objects in the ground. (Temporal phrases which are inherently non-deictic may be used deictically as well, but their use is much more restricted in Russian.)

Accordingly, spatial deixis in particular and spatial semantics in general involve a set of coordinates and vectors as established by Talmy (1975, 1983), which include the figure, ground and path (for mobile spatial descriptions). The figure is the

¹ Hanks (1990) argues that deixis is essentially sociocentric, i.e., that the deictic frame of reference is a social construct.
referenced object whose location is being identified, or which is moving. The ground is the entity relative to which the figure is located. Here we are specifically interested in what Fillmore (1982) has called locating expressions: The expressions used to associate an object with a place. In Russian spatial prefixes in conjunction with verbs of motion or existential predicated may function as locating expression. The relative orientation points, or origos, and the position of an observer are necessary coordinates in defining the spatial relationships determined by primary deixis and hidden deixis.

In the unmarked case, the spatial deictic reference point is the location of the speaker at the time of utterance. In other words, here will be understood to be a subspace which includes the speaker, and there a subspace which does not. Not only does the speaker's physical location determine the spatial zero-point, but also the speaker's body orientation. This is of significance in such relations as front/back and up/down (Hill 1982). Certain objects, such as cars and refrigerators, have intrinsic fronts and backs, tops and bottoms, as does the human body. But others (such as trees, boxes) lack any intrinsic front/back relation, and some (such as balls) lack any intrinsic top or bottom. The position of the referenced object, or figure, with respect to such an object (here, the ground) is determined with relation to the spatial zero-point. That is to say that as speaker, whether I say that the child is in front of or behind the tree depends upon whether the child is between me and the tree, or whether the tree is between me and the child. However, it is specifically the position of the observer, and not necessarily the speaker, which is relevant. This is a fundamental point which is often overlooked in the study of hidden deixis (Apresjan 1986: 11).

Furthermore, the locations of other elements in the context can be equally important. Consider the following two sentences, taken from Herskovits (1986: 15):

(1a) Lucy is in the supermarket.
(1b) Lucy is at the supermarket.

Only (1a) is appropriate if both the speaker and the addressee are at the supermarket while speaking. Note that (1a) sounds more plausible if here or right here is added (Lucy is right here in the supermarket).

In some cases not only is the reference point important, but also important is whether the presence of an observer is either implicit or explicit (Apresjan 1986; Clark 1974; Fillmore 1971; Herskovits 1986). For objects with intrinsic fronts and backs (such as houses or cars), the position of the observer may be irrelevant. Thus, sentences like (2) are true regardless of where the observer is standing:

(2) Pered domom rastet derevo.
in front house grows tree
    In front of the house [there] grows a tree.

But many objects, such as a tree, have no intrinsic front or back, and for these objects the truth of such sentences as (3) will depend upon where the observer stands:
3. Prefixes and spatial configurations

An intricate system of verbal prefixes works in conjunction with prepositions to specify spatial configurations in Russian. These prefixes signal the way that the figure can be situated in or move through space. Because their primary spatial meanings are clearly manifested with verbs of motion, I will focus on that usage here. A core set of spatial prefixes which denote and delineate motion directed toward a goal (e.g., pri-, po-), motion from a source or starting point (po-, u-, ot-), and motion into (v-) and out of (vy-) a spatial field are frequently found in apartment and other spatial descriptions. The Russian system of spatial prefixes is complex; many studies have been devoted to individual prefixes as well as to the system in its entirety (see Andrews 1984; Boguslawski 1963; Cienki 1989; Flier 1975, 1984, 1985). In what follows I will focusing on the use of certain prefixes in encoding deixis and point of view.

Flier (1975, 1985) argues for positing an underlying invariant meaning for each of the Russian prefixes from which the resulting submeanings could theoretically be derived given the lexical meaning of the verb and the inherent lexico-semantic and morphosyntactic features of the preposition. He identifies three sets of prefixal features (Flier 1985: 139-140): The frame features, the operation features, and the perspective features. Flier’s basic hypothesis (developed in greater detail for the prefix vz- in Gallant 1979, for the prefix na- in Russell 1985, for za- in Janda 1985 and for za-, pere-, do- and ot- in Janda 1986) is that the addition of the prefix to a verb signals the imposition of some kind of limit on the predicate. The implication

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2 Apresjan (1986: 112) further specifies that "the distance from X to Y is envisioned by the speaker as not being (much) greater than the distance from Y to the observer."

3 The prepositions are themselves, to a certain extent, redundant. With some verbs the choice of preposition will determine the interpretation of the motion's path, as in the case of projt ezer les 'to cross through the forest' versus projt les 'to pass [by] the forest'. However, in a number of cases the preposition is predictable in that use of a certain prefix will virtually require a given preposition. These include pod- +k; ot- + ot; and do- + do, as in: podoji k stolu 'to go up to the table', otoji ot stola 'to go away from the table' or doji do počti 'to go as far as the post office'. This redundancy stems from the fact that the spatial prefixes are historically derived from prepositions.
of this limit is that metaphorical space is divided into what Flier calls the **domain** and the **periphery**, or the space inside and outside the limit. The frame features project onto the event at least one limit, which may be **inceptive**, **lateral**, **terminal**, or unspecified. Flier divides the operation features into two subcategories, the **trajectory features** and the **relation features**. The trajectory features are locative in nature, denoting such concepts as **origination** and **destination** and have to do with how the event progresses with relation to the domain and the periphery. The relational features are more aspectual in nature. The perspective features, a concept which Flier does not develop, "characterize the viewpoint of the observer of the narrated event as **internal** or **external** to the domain of the prefix frame" (1985: 140). As we will see below, these features can be accounted for in terms of the deictic center.

Each prefix specifies the spatial vectors involved in motion events. Flier asserts that this spatial meaning is invariant, arguing that the Russian verbal prefixes as a whole can "be analyzed in abstract spatial terms capable of metaphorical interpretation in nonspatial universes" (1985: 139). Their spatial use is most clearly manifested in combination with verbs of motion. The presence versus absence of spatial prefixes, alongside the tense/aspect of the verbs of motion, results in the fact that Russian speakers can specify exactly how a motion event progresses through time and space.

The metaphorical space is divided into a domain and periphery, which find analogues in the spatial deictic field. In both, the domain and the deictic field are that subspace which includes the deictic center. Static spatial descriptions may be deictically anchored to that origo, while motion events may be deictically directed toward or a way from it. Such relations are typically encoded in deictic motion verbs such as **come** and **go**. In Russian, these relations may be encoded in prefixed verbs of motion **poji** 'to go', 'to set off' or **prijti** 'to arrive' in terms of hidden deixis in Russian. Also relevant are motion events which cross from the domain into the periphery, or vice versa. Thus in primary deictic relations, the position of the figure to the figure with relation to that field and its boundaries is crucial. For hidden deixis a third point, that of the observer, must be posited.

In English, the distribution of **come** and **go** is dependent upon the location of the speaker and addressee(s) at the time of utterance, as well as the location of the goal, the time of the motion event, and the participation of the speaker and addressee(s) as figures in the motion event (Fillmore 1966, 1973, 1975). In Russian, the unprefixed verbs of motion are not deictic, and can be used to signal motion directed either toward or away from the speaker (the deictic center), as in illustrated in (4):

\[(4) \text{Idi sjuda! Idi tuda!}
\]

However, prefixation of these verbs can have an impact on the relevance of contextual features. For example, the prefix **po-** specifies the initial onset of a motion event, while **pri-** specifies its conclusion, or arrival at a goal. When either of these prefixes is used, the location of the figure in relation to the goal may be relevant (see also Grenoble 1991).
In (5a), the goal of the motion corresponds to the speaker's location at the moment of utterance. In such instances, verbs with pridu is strongly preferred over pojdu, which is grammatical but pragmatically infelicitous. Accordingly, it was rejected by native speakers. By virtue of the fact that the goal is the location of the speech event, the motion is viewed from that endpoint. Therefore, it is odd to use a verb which encodes the occurrence of motion from the other end of the event.

When the goal is not the location of the speech event, the participation of the speaker and/or addressee is relevant, as in (6):

(5a) Ja pojdu sjuda v 7.00 Ja pridu sjuda v 7.00
I will set out here at 7:00 I will arrive here at 7:00

(5b) Ja pojdu tuda v 7.00 Ja pridu tuda v 7.00
I will set out there at 7:00 I will arrive there at 7:00

In (6), both the speaker and the addressee will participate in the motion, directed toward a goal which is not in the spatial domain at the time of utterance. As the versions (6a) and (6b) show, the prefixed verb in po- is acceptable here, while pri- is not. Note that this kind of speaker/addressee involvement is precisely the kind of environment where come is possible in English. Thus some of the same factors are relevant for both English come/go and Russian pojti/prijti, but their distribution differs.

The distribution of po- and pri- can only be accounted for with reference to the spatial coordinates of the motion event, as well as those of the participants in both the motion event and the speech event. In cases of other spatial prefixes, it is necessary to make reference to a third point, that of a potential observer. One set of spatial prefixes, v- and vy-, will serve to illustrate the use of hidden deixis and the role of the observer. These are antonyms in the sense that v- signals motion into a space and vy- motion out of a space. This space is prototypically closed or bounded, as in (7):

(6) a. Xočeš' pojti s nami v teatr?
want to go with us to theater
b. *Xočeš' prijti s nami v teatr?
want to come with us to theater
‘Do you want to go the theater with us?’

In (7a) the verb vošel signals that the figure has entered the room, while in (7b) vyšel signals that he has exited and is outside the room. Thus, the room is the domain and ground. The prepositions in each sentence reinforce the spatial relations encoded by the prefixes. In both cases the perfective aspect of the verbs, along with the prefixes, signals the completion of these telic events, such that in (7a) the figure is located inside the domain, while in (7b) he is located outside of it. However, the choice of these prefixes can be dependent upon the position of an
observer, or upon the location of some reference point. In English such point of view relations are often encoded through manipulation of the deictic motion verbs *come* and *go*. Because *come* is used to signal motion directed toward the origo, its use will entail motion directed toward an observer which is implicitly understood to be at the spatial origo. This is in contrast to *go*, which signals motion directed away from the observer. Example (8), an adaptation from Fillmore (1976: 102, taken from Hemingway) provides an illustration:

(8) a. The door of Harry’s lunchroom opened and two men **came in**
   b. The door of Harry’s lunchroom opened and two men **went in**

Fillmore makes the point that the verb *come* in (5a) puts the reader inside the diner, if we were going to film this scene, the camera would need to be located inside the diner. But (5b) puts the reader outside the diner. A camera filming the scene would have to be located out on the street.

A Russian translation of these sentences would not distinguish between the two versions, using *vošli* for both *came in* in (5a) and *went in* in (5b):

(9) *Dver’ ot kafe otkrylas’ i vošli dvoe mužčin.*
   ‘The door to cafe opened and entered two men’

The point here is that the prefix *v*- signals motion into an enclosed space, and so is the only option here, and *vošli* may be best translated by a deictically neutral verb in English, such as *enter*. The corresponding antonym, *vyšli* ‘went out’, would put the two men outside of the cafe on the street. The figures, the two men, are seen as moving from an open space into an enclosed area, regardless of the position of a potential observer. The vector of the motion event leads into an enclosed domain, a configuration denoted by the spatial prefix *v*- in Russian.

When the described motion involves movement from an enclosed space to an open area, or vice versa, the spatial configurations are unambiguous and neutral to the position of a potential observer. Accordingly, the use of *v*- (or the antonymous *vy*- ) is non-deictic. However, other kinds of spatial configurations are possible, such as where two enclosed spaces are contiguous and share one side. Such a spatial configuration is commonly found in buildings with adjacent rooms, such as apartments or house. In such a situation whether a person is seen as entering one room or exiting another will depend upon the deictic center and the position of an observer. In these cases the distribution of these two prefixes depends upon (hidden) deictic relations.

Apresjan (1986: 22-23) also points to the distinction between the deictic and non-deictic uses of the prefix *vy*- . When the described motion is neutral with regard to a potential observer, *vy*- is used non-deictically, as is *v*- in example (9) above.a

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a Apresian’s example is *Ivan vyšel iz domu i medlenno pobrel po ulice* ‘Ivan exited from the house and slowly started to stroll down the street’. He points out that the verb here will remain the same, regardless of whether the observer is inside the house or out on the street (Apresjan 1986: 22). The movement is from an enclosed area into an open space, the opposite of the motion in (9).
In (10) the figure, *mal'čik* ‘boy’, is the rightmost constituent in the sentence. This is the usual position in Russian for indefinite, new information and rheme or comment. The implications of this thematic structure are that the figure is new information, and therefore has just entered the observer’s field of vision. If the observer were located in the room itself, the figure would have previously been in his or her field of vision. Therefore, the position of the observer may be tied to the informational structure of the discourse.

Let us start with a relatively straightforward set of examples, taken from the Bulgakov novel *The Master and Margarita*. In both of these the figure moves on to a verandah. In (11), the verb *vyšel* puts the observer inside the room from which the figure exits or, in other words, he goes out onto the verandah:

(11) Bulgakov 1973: 57
\[I \text{ bylo v polnoci' videnie v adu.} \]
\text{and was at midnight sighting in hell}
\[Výšel na verandu černoglazý krasavec [...] \]
\text{exit onto verandah black-eyed handsome man}
\text{‘And at midnight there was a sighting in hell. A black-eyed handsome man walked out onto the verandah [...]’}

Here the figure exits from an enclosed space out onto the verandah. As in (10), the figure here is thematically new information, and enters the observer’s sight with this motion event. This is in contrast to (12), in which the verb *vxodil* puts the figure outside, coming in onto the verandah from the street (as opposed to exiting from the room):

(12) Bulgakov 1973: 69
\[Soveršenno bol'nój i dažé postarevšíj poet ne bolee čem \]
\text{completely sick and even having aged poet not more than}
\[čerez dve minuty vxodil na verandu Griboedova \]
\text{within two minutes entered onto verandah of Griboedov}
\text{‘The completely sick and even aged poet, within no more than two minutes came onto the verandah of Griboedov’}

The verb *vxodil* emphasizes that the figure enters the verandah, rather than that the poet exits a room for the verandah. Note that it would be grammatically possible to use the prefixes *vy-* or *po-* here as well, as is the case with example (11). However, a change in the spatial prefix would entail a change in the perspective from which the motion event is presented. The juxtaposition of these two examples from the same novel shows that it is not the case that movement onto a verandah requires either of these prefixes in Russian. Rather the choice depends on the point of view of the observer and the thematic role of the figure in the text.
Given this overall summary of some of the key deictic uses of spatial prefixes, let us now consider how they work in a larger context. First we will examine an excerpt from the first two pages of text from Elena Bonner’s book Dočki - materi ‘Daughters - mothers’. It is my claim that the narrator’s mother is the deictic center, and the center of point of view and of empathy (as defined by Kuno 1978, 1987; Yokoyama 1988; Yokoyama and Klenin 1978).

(13) Bonnêr: 1991: 8
1 Vspominaju i perebiraju v pamjati maminy poslednie dni [...] recall and sort over in memory mama’s last days
2 V sredu 23 dekabija mama utrom vstala, kak vsegda, on Wednesday 23 December mama morning got up as always
3 Mama vypila kofe i s’ela kusok buločki s mat'm Mama drank coffee and ate piece of roll with honey
4 Potom posla v vannuju i ja uslyšala, čto ona then went in washroom and I heard that she kak-to očen’ sort of very
5 tjaželo zakaštjelas, Ja vošla k nej: ona sidela na heavily started coughing I entered to her she sat on stool and
6 skazala, čto čto-to nesorošo s serdecem. Ja prinesla ej said that something not good with heart. I brought her nitroglicerin. Ona vdoxnula i krez paru minut uže nitroglycerin she sighed and in few minutes already
7 so mnoj vyšla snova v kuxniju. [...] with me exited again to kitchen [continuation, Bonnêr 1991: 9]
8 ja vse če rešila spat’ leč’ zdes’, u nee I nonetheless decided to sleep to lie down here at her

‘I’m recalling and sorting over mama’s last days in my memory. [...] On Wednesday, December 23rd, mama got up, as always, around 10:00. [...] Mama drank some coffee and ate a piece of a roll with honey. Then she went into the bathroom and I heard her start coughing badly. I went into her: She was sitting on the stool and said that something was not right with her heart. I brought her some nitroglycerin. She sighed and in a few minutes already went out with me into the kitchen. [...] Nonetheless I decided to go to bed here, in her room’

This example is taken from the first page of the narration; line 1 here corresponds to the first line of the entire novel. This first line, as well as the title Dočki-materi ‘Daughters-mothers’ itself, suggest that the mother is the literary theme, in the sense that the text is about the mother. Moreover, she is deictic center and center
of empathy.\textsuperscript{5} In the next three paragraphs of the text, the narrator clearly takes the point of view of her mother. The opening action of the narrative in the second paragraph (line 2 here) takes place, most probably, in the kitchen, where the mother has eaten breakfast. The narrative backbone consists of a series temporally sequential verbs of motion (lines 4, 5, 6 and 8). In line 4, po\textit{š}la ‘went’ gets the mother out of the kitchen and on her way to the washroom; the prefix po- signals the motion event from that initial point in the kitchen. At this point the narrator and mother are in different places; the narrator’s own location and perspective are distinct from those of her mother: The verb \textit{ja uslyšala} ‘I heard’ explicitly signals the disjuncture of the two locations. Note that in line 5 the narrator says \textit{ja vošla k nej} ‘I came in to her’; the verb \textit{vošla} here puts the motion right in the washroom with the mother. Alternatively, the verb \textit{pošla} the prefix po- (instead of \textit{v-}) would also be grammatically acceptable here, but with a change in perspective: Po- simply denotes the initial onset of motion, that moment when the figure starts to move. In line 6 \textit{vošla} is analogous to the use of the prefix \textit{v-} in example (12); in both cases the observer is at the endpoint, or the goal, of the motion. Here that puts the observer’s position in with the mother. The next motion verb, \textit{prinesla} ‘brought’ in line 6, again illustrates the use of the prefix pri- to denote the arrival at the goal of a motion event. It is not a primary deictic verb but its use here involves hidden deixis: It has the effect of focusing on that terminal point of the spatial vector, again at the mother’s location. It is at this terminus that the observer is situated. In line 8 \textit{vyšla} ‘exited’ signals the departure from the spatial orientation point; \textit{vošla} ‘entered’ is also grammatically acceptable, but would shift the spatial center to the kitchen. The narrator explicitly establishes her mother’s room as deictic center with \textit{zdes} ‘here’ in line 9.

In this way, the prefixed verbs of motion signal hidden deixis. They specify the spatial vectors of a motion event with relation to not only the domain, or spatial field, but also to one or more orientation points within that domain. The mother is established as deictic center within that domain: Her location serves as the key spatial reference point to which the narrator’s own (changing) position is anchored. The daughter provides a second orientation point which only sometimes coincides with that of the mother. Paths which transverse the domain to connect these two reference points are established through prefixed verbs of motion.

4. Apartment descriptions

Apartment descriptions will provide an illustration of the complex interaction of spatial deictics in Russian. Apartment descriptions provide information about the conceptualization of space, in that they show the transformation of a physical domain into verbal narrative. Typically, the narrator describes the apartment in terms of the path which an imagined figure would take while touring the apartment. Analogous to the excerpt in (13), these texts all have a well-established deictic center, which is the front door of the apartment.

The descriptions of living spaces have been shown to follow well-formed and

\textsuperscript{5} Nichols (1984) similarly points out that thematic viewpoint usually coincides with empathy.
predictable patterns in American English. In a now well-known study, Linde and Labov (1975) show how the descriptions of apartments are rule-governed discourses which transfer spatial lay-outs into temporally organized narratives. Ullmer-Ehrich (1982) conducted a similar study of German room descriptions by interviewing 20 students at the University of Düsseldorf. A study of Russian apartment descriptions shows differences that rest both on the different culture-specific points of apartments in modern day Russia as well as on the language-specific differences of existential type sentences in Russian and English and the linguistic devices for encoding spatial information. In each Russian account, the descriptive information about the layout of an individual apartment is presented in roughly the same order as in all other (Russian) accounts, and speakers use the same techniques and same syntactic structures in describing their apartments. In other words, the Russian descriptions are, like the American English counterparts, rule-governed.

The data used here were collected from a set of fifteen interviews of Moscow biology students. While the total number of Russian interviews is significantly smaller than Linde and Labov's original pool of 72 interviews, the smaller set of Russian apartment descriptions adheres to a relatively rigid format. The descriptions exhibit such striking correspondences that it is possible to speak of them as a representative corpus with a high degree of certainty, although further research in this area is clearly needed.

The interviews were taken after the students had been in the US for about five weeks during the summer of 1991, just prior to the August putsch with the subsequent overthrow of the Communist Regime in the (former) USSR. Therefore, the students refer to their country as the Soviet Union. More importantly, their descriptions are in part based on the assumption that certain Soviet laws regarding living space are in effect. Of specific relevance to this study is the fact that according to Soviet law each citizen was guaranteed a certain amount of square meters of living space; the kitchen, hallways, toilet and bathroom are not considered part of this living space. Rental fees were based, in part, on the square meterage of the living space, with the immediate result of this rule being that new apartments were constructed with very small kitchens and baths and short, narrow or even nonexistent hallways. Furthermore, every adult knows the exact size of his or her living space in square meters. Therefore, this is one of the most salient pieces of information in the description.

Such cultural background is necessary to understand the overall structure of the apartment descriptions. All but two of the speakers responded to my initial request to describe their apartments by asking which apartment they should discuss. In many cases they had as many as three apartments to choose from: Their parents apartment, the apartment where they were actually written in, and their in-laws apartment, where they were actually living. Even the unmarried students would be living in one apartment and written into another.

All but one speaker began the actual apartment description by stating the number of rooms in the apartment. This information was often followed by noting the total square meters in the apartment. Half the students mentioned the area of Moscow in which the apartment was located. This was then followed by a listing of the rooms and their general contents. Surprisingly, in response to the request to describe an apartment, only one speaker supplied a spatial description. The actual layout of the apartment was given only in response to the direct question "Kak..."
komnaty raspoloženy? ‘How are the rooms situated?’.

The order of the information given about the apartment corresponds to the importance given such information in Soviet society. For example, because many of the twentieth-century apartments were built according to standardized plans, their layout is largely predictable. (See line 14 of example (19), where Natasha describes her home as a "Khruschev apartment.") The speakers I interviewed make some assumptions about what is interesting to the listener. Outside confirmation of this can be found by examining the want ad sections of Russian newspapers for apartment advertisements. Even a cursory glance at the advertisement section confirms the overall importance of the number of rooms and apartment size, as illustrated in (14), taken from a special want ad newspaper:

(14) Vse dlja vas No 11 (November 4-10, 1991), p.8:

[I exchange] Otličnuju 2-komnatnuju kvaritu (34.0 kv.m)
[kitchen] 10 kv.m, bolšoj xoll, 16 ĕtaž v 22-ētažnom dome,
metro "Kaširskaja" na 3-komnatnuju kvaritu (ot 40 kv.m),
kitchen preferably from 7 kv.m, r-n
Krasnogvardejskij, Proletarskij, centr.

‘[I am exchanging] a wonderful 2-room apartment (34 m²), kitchen 10 m², large hall, on the 16th floor of a 22-story building, metro "Kaširskaja", for a 3-room apartment (from 40 m²), with the kitchen from 7 m², in the Krasnogvardejskij or Proletarskij region, or the center’

Almost all advertisements begin with the number of rooms in the apartment which is frequently followed by stating the total number of square meters. The majority of advertisements also include the floor of the building on which the apartment is located, total number of floors in the building, and the nearest metro station. These may or may not be followed by a description of other amenities or features (such as telephone, balcony, etc.). The number of rooms and their size are the two most important features of Russian apartments for those seeking to rent or let an apartment.

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6 Such postings are typically organized in the want ad section of newspapers in column headed menjaju ‘I exchange’, prodaju ‘I sell’, snitu ‘I will rent’ or kupaju ‘I will buy’. These are all 1st person singular verb forms; kupaju and snitu are perfective verbs, while menjaju and sdaju are imperfective. It is unclear why the aspect should vary here.

In (13), otličnuju 2-komnatnuju kvaritu ‘great 2-room apartment’ (line 1) is in the accusative case as the first complement of the column heading menjaju. This is the usual format for such advertisements. In contrast, kvaritu ‘kitchen’ in the beginning of line 2 is in the nominative case, which is also typical. It seems that only the apartment itself is interpreted as the complement of the verb, while the individual rooms are attributes of the apartment and listed in citation form, i.e., the nominative case.
For describing the actual layout of the apartments, several possible techniques have been identified. These can be called the *mapping technique*, the *modeling technique* and the *tour-representing technique*. In the map-style description, the speaker presents a layout of the apartment from a bird's eye view. Map descriptions account for only 3% of Linde and Labov's corpus; there are no map descriptions in my data. An excerpt from one of their map-style descriptions will illustrate this:

(15) Linde and Labov 1975: 929, ex. 8:
I'd say it's laid out in a huge square pattern, broken down into four units. If you were looking down on this apartment from a height, it would be like - like I said before, a huge square with two lines drawn thought the center to make like four smaller squares.

Another possible technique is the modeling technique: The modeling technique the speaker uses the room in which the conversation takes place as the model for the room that is to be described. So in describing the room, the speaker transfers features of that room to the speech location, relying on gestures and adverbs of primary deixis, such as here and there. Ullmer-Ehrich predicted that this would be a logical strategy, and yet only one of a total of 20 speakers of German adopted this strategy in describing their dormitory rooms at the University of Düsseldorf. (Linde and Labov 1974 report no descriptions of this type.) Similarly, when native Russian speakers were asked to describe their Moscow apartments while they were seated in my office, no one used this technique. (One speaker did compare his bookcases to mine, although here he was specifically interested in the height and depth of the bookcases and the number of books. One other compares the size of a room to my office; see example (16) below.)

One reason that this technique was avoided may have been that both the German and Russian speakers were aware of the tape recorder and its failure to record the hand gestures necessary to make this technique successful. It would also seem to be a technique better suited to describing individual rooms than apartment layouts: The interview takes place in a room, which could then theoretically be used as the model for the room described. However, given that the Russian apartments are often so compact that their layout can be described from one vantage point, it would certainly be possible to have some point in the interview room serve as the reference point for that layout description. This was not a technique used by any speakers. Furthermore, although most speakers gave some kind of description of the individual rooms in the apartment, no one used this modeling technique to describe the contents of a given room. Thus although it is theoretically possible to make use of the physical aspects of the room to map one set of spatial structures onto another, Russian speakers do not use this technique in apartment descriptions. Instead, they give a grocery-style list of the features of a room, as seen in example (19).

Linde and Labov find that the overwhelming majority of subjects use an imaginary tour set up when describing their apartments. A tour is a speech act which provides a minimal set of paths by which each room could be entered (Linde and Labov 1974: 930). There are two basic kinds of vectors: Static type and mobile type. Starting at the front door, the subjects describe the apartments as if taking the interviewer on a tour. These "tours" included either static or mobile descriptions,
which correspond to Ullmer-Ehrich's findings that interviewees took the interviewers on imaginary tours of their dorm rooms by using either a "gaze" tour which relied on stationary verbs or a "walking" tour technique, which used motion verbs to move the interviewer/addressee along the imaginary path of the tour. (In Ullmer-Ehrich 1982, the speaker takes the listener on an imaginary tour around the walls of the room.) This method relies heavily on hidden deixis, with speakers using such secondary deictics as left, right, front, and back relating the positions of the described objects to one another.

A prototypical tour begins at the entrance to the apartment. While the door itself is often mentioned, it may not be explicitly invoked. It is, however, inferrable, both from real-world knowledge and by the use of prefixed motion verbs which signal entrance (as in kogda vy.vxodite 'when you enter'). This front door, and the figure's body position upon entering it, serve as the primary deictic center and viewpoint for the entire description. Consider the following example of a walking tour: The begins tour at the front door and moves the addressee down the hall through the apartment but without entering any rooms:

(16) apartment description, Igor':
1 Kogda vy.vxodite v moju kvariru, pered vami koridor, when you enter into my apartment in front of you corridor
2 sprava kuxnya 10 metrov (.) eto cu't bol'še cem eta komnata, to right kitchen of ten meters this bit bigger than this room
3 Esli vy pojdeteci eshe vpered (.) opjat'taki sprava ot vas nazyvaem if you will go still ahead again to right of you call
4 my bol'saja komnata, zal, gostinaja (.) uh raspoložen we big room hall living room uh situated
televizor, drugaja television another
5 radioapparatura, kresla, divan. eto komnata dlja (.) dlja gostej. radio chairs couch this room for for guests
6 Uh esli vy pojdeteci eshe dal'še, sleva budet komnata Uh if you will pass still further to left will be room
moix roditelej of my parents
7 Tam že lodža, komnata z lodzeptj, lodža prostomaja, there PART balcony room with balcony balcony spacious,
lodža (.) balcony
8 Sprava byvsaja moja komnata (.) Sejčas tam živet moj brat (.) to right former my room now there lives my brother
9 Da, rjadom s moej komnataj meždu moej komnataj PART next to my room between my room
moix roditelej raspoložena vannaja, tualet of my parents situated washroom toilet

‘When you enter my apartment, there is a corridor in front of you, to the right is a kitchen, ten meters in size. That's a bit bigger than this room. If you will continue going ahead, to your right is what we call the big room, or hall, or living
Apart from a television, another radio, armchairs and a couch. This is a room for company. Uh- if you will pass even further [down the hall], to the left will be my parents' room. There [in this same place] there is a balcony, it's a room with a balcony, a spacious balcony, a balcony. To the right is my former room; my brother lives there now. And between my room and my parents' room there's a washroom and toilet.'

The addressee is envisioned as a figure on a tour which moves down the hall, stopping to describe the location of each room, diverging to give the contents of the large room, and always returning to the point of the tour where he left off. Motion along the path of this imaginary tour is denoted by a series of prefixed motion verbs: Vxodite 'you enter' (line 1) puts the figure inside the apartment at the front door; the figure's imagined position serves as origo, as seen in the phrase pered vami 'in front of you' in that same line, as well as sprava 'to the right' in line 2. Both are cases of hidden deixis, as the figure's position determines spatial relations. The position of this origo changes as the tour moves through the apartment. Motion verbs (pjodete 'will go' in line 3; projdete 'will pass' in line 6) create the path of the tour and locate the relative position of the origo on the path with respect to the last referenced point, as shown by use of the adverbial phrases ešče vpered 'further ahead' (line 3) and ešče dal'še 'even further' (line 6). The position of the rooms continues to be determined with reference to this origo, as in sleva 'to the left' in line 6 and sprava 'to the right' in line 8. Only in line 9 is a non-deictic orientation point established, with the washroom and toilet situated between two stationary points.

The use of the front door as spatial zero-point is so common that its existence can be presupposed and treated as implicit. Evidence of its recoverability is seen in (17), where the apartment layout begins at the hall, presumably at the front door. It is mentioned for the first time only in line 9, when the speaker explicitly states this reference point to orient the figure on the path:

(17) apartment description, Natasha
1 My živem na vtorom ėtaže.
   We live on second floor
2 U nas očen' malen’kij koridor
   by us very small hall
3 Potom, značit napravo i vanna i tualet ěto
   then so to right and washroom and toilet this
   v odnoj komnate,
   in one room
4 prijamo takoj ne bol’šoj koridorcik i kuxnja
   straight such not large hallway and kitchen
5 uh naley - bol’šaja komnata i my nazvaem -
   uh to left big room and we call
6 proxodnaja komnata, vot ěto komnata i čerez nee
   passage room PART this room and through it
7 nado projti čtoby popast’ v druguju komnatu
   must pass in order to get to other room
We live on the second floor. We have a small hall. Then, to the right there's both a washroom and a toilet. This is in one room. Straight ahead this kinda not large hallway and the kitchen. Uh, to the left is the big room, the big room and we call [it] the passage room. This is the room through which [lit. it] one must pass to get to the other room. Uh if [you] turn to the right from the small hall where ... when we had just come into the apartment, we turn to the right there will be also is situated a not large, small room, we call [it] the storage room. [...]

This tour shows an interesting combination of mobile and stationary vectors. The front door as deictic center is implicit and treated as inferrable (as defined by Prince 1981). Directions are indicated with reference to its location, as in *napravo* 'to the right' (line 3) and *nalevo* 'to the left' (line 5). This origo is overtly mentioned only in line 9, following a pause. Here its mention seems to be a repair, a recognition of the potential need to reestablish the orientation point for the addressee. Two points are interesting here: The way the motion verbs create the path of the tour, and the recoverability of the reference points along that path.

But this is not typical of the descriptions in the corpus, which contains only these two mobile tours. The remaining descriptions consist of static vectors, with rooms situated along a path by existential predicates. This may in part simply reflect the relatively small size of the sample. An additional explanation may lie in the relatively simple and predictable floor plans; in (16) the tour consists of a straight line down the hall. Most frequently, the description begins at the front door, but the observer remains stationary. Verbs of motion are used in the description only in an existential sense: They indicate how the various rooms are situated with respect to each other, as illustrated in (18):

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(18) Mmm, značit, kogda vy vxođite v kvartiru
      mmm so when you enter in apartment
      sprava ot vas nebol'šoj nebol'šoj koridora idet na kuhninu
      to right of you not large not large hallway goes to kitchen
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‘mm, so when you go in the apartment
to your right a not large- not large hallway goes  to the kitchen’

In these descriptions the front door acts as the deictic center and reference point; rooms are located in relation to that door from the point of view of the imaginary speaker standing there. But the addressee does take a tour of the apartment, as was seen in example (16). Instead, idet ‘goes’ is a stationary vector, signaling how the hallway is located in space. It does not denote a motion event, with a figure moving along a path.

In contrast, room descriptions in the corpus can be divided into two categories dependent upon whether the room is "entered" on the imaginary tour. Rooms that are not entered are described in terms of size (in square meters) and/or in terms of occupants. Rooms that are entered are described in terms of their contents, following more a listing technique than a tour. As shown in the following example, a typical room description, the speaker inventories the contents of each room in the apartment without firmly establishing one fixed point of reference. Objects are located non-deictically relative to one another, beginning with the window as reference point in line 3:

(19) kitchen description, Volodja
1 kuxnya, kuxnya metrov vosem’ kvadratnyx i potolki tam
kitchen kitchen meters 8 square and ceilings there
dva pjit’desjat
2 50
2 est’ xolodil’nik stoit okolo okna, kuxonnyj garnitur,
there is refrigerator stands near window kitchen cabinet set
3 s drugoj storony, belogo sveta plita vdelana [??] v garnitur
on other side of white color stove built in in cabinet
4 i mojka tože vdelana v garnitur stol naprotiv, s
and basin also built in in cabinet table opposite on
drugoj storon
other side
5 mmm u toj že steny, gde i xolodil’nik, časy, schye
mmm on that same wall where also refrigerator clock, tick
6 n-na podokonnike stojat cvety na xolodil’nike tože, vot.
on windowsill stand floors on refrigerator also PART
7 pro kuxnju vse, da, dver’ so steklom tam ešče.
about kitchen all yes door with glass there also

‘The kitchen, the kitchen is about 8 square meters and the ceilings there are two and half meters. There’s a refrigerator which stands near the window, a white kitchen cabinet, on the other side, with a built-in stove and the basin (sink) is also built into the cabinet. The table is opposite, on the other side, mmm, on the same wall as the refrigerator. There’s a table clock and on the windowsill are some flowers, and on the refrigerator as well. That’s it for the kitchen, well yes, there’s also a door with a glass window there.’
This room description is representative of the corpus. There is no single fixed origo in this description, and the spatial configurations rely minimally on deictic relations, consisting primarily of non-deictic stationary vectors. The spatial orientation point shifts throughout, but note that none of the description depends on the location of an observer. Rather, objects are located relative to one another, regardless of any deictic reference point. For example, the first orientation point is established in line 2, with the refrigerator located next to the window. In line 4 the kitchen cabinet is identified as standing opposite it. At this point there is a brief shift, with the cabinet serving as central to the spatial domain: The stove and sink are built into it. Similar anchorings are seen in lines 4 and 6.

Thus, while the room descriptions are characterized by a listing technique with stative predicates, the apartment descriptions are categorized either as walking tours or gaze tours with active predicates. This predicate distribution is typical for lists versus narratives (Schiffrin 1994: 304). The active predicates in the apartment descriptions entail imagined or visual movement along a path. This illustrates the role of paths in establishing coherence in the text: The paths represent a structure around which the description is built.

5. Conclusion

It can now be seen that the apartment descriptions resemble narratives, but with an underlying difference in their spatial versus temporal relationships. A narrative is characterized by sequentially ordered event clauses which constitute its temporal backbone. As the narrative progresses, so too does narrative time: The event clauses advance the reference time. In a narrative time is represented as a linear string of events, and backgrounded, non-plot-advancing information can be seen as offshoots along that time line.

Analogously, an apartment description consists of a linear path through the apartment. The path advances as the imagined figure moves along it from room to room. The front door serves as a the primary spatial orientation point, and the position of a figure with reference to that origo may be presupposed or may be explicitly invoked. The location of individual rooms serve as intermediary points along that path, and are situated with reference to the figure’s body position and the front door. The rooms serve as subsequent reference points along the path which, along with the front door, can be reinvoked in order to reestablish deictic orientation. (Such spatial backtracks may be similar to temporal backtracks in narrative, after which one returns to the last predicated event in the narrative.) In this way the paths provide a superordinate structure for the apartment descriptions and help to establish coherence in the text.
Appendix

Transcription conventions

- sentence final falling intonation
- clause final intonation
( ) brief unmeasured pause
0.3 measured pause (minutes.seconds)
[???] unintelligible syllables
[..] my ellipsis
PART particle
ADJ adjectival

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