

Zero Sign

Charles Bally and the Geneva school.

Russ – one zero form in each paradigm. Nsg ~ Gpl. –ov/-ej vs. #. *Žena* vs. *žen*, *vólos* vs. *volós*, (stress), *bojarin*, vs. *bojar* (a suffix), or *aršin* vs. *pjat' aršin*.

something vs. nothing on both levels, signifiant and signifie.

bog paradigm means ‚non feminine’ while the –a paradigm can be either: *noga* (fem), *sluga* (masc), *nedotroga* (epicene). This is the *paradigmatic* or morphological meaning.

bog type can be masc or neuter. Different only in nom and animate acc. Zero only in masc. –o can be neuter or masc: *toporišče* ‚handle of an axe’ is neuter, while *topórišče* ‚huge axe’ is masc. Cf. in Lermontov’s *Taman’*: *skvernyj gorodishko* (masc).

So *noga*, *supruga* paradigm has no gender differentiation. The –a has no morph. function, while the zero in *suprug* has.

But on the level of *signifiant* a fem noun if it refers to a female is always female. A masc noun could have a feminine referent or a male referent. *Suprug* could generally refer to both. *Tovarišč*, *vrač* could be females, while *žurnalistka* is only female. So here the feminine, on the referential level, is marked and the masculine is unmarked. Note that epicene nouns like *ubijtsa* ‚murderer’ depend on real world reference for their gender. *Papa* and *djadja* are always masc. But if a noun of fem. gender always refers to a female.

Masc has zero meaning. *Vrač* is masculine, but can refer to a person of either gender. This Jakobson calls a chiasmus: the form with zero morph meaning (-a) designates a positive meaning, while the form with positive morph function has a zero meaning.

Opposition of contradictories. A vs. no statement of A. (vs. equipollence).

Perfective is marked, imperfective has no statement of A (boundary crossed, completion, etc).

Determinate is marked, indeterminate, unmarked. A verb can have two unmarked values but not two marked.

154) Forms which are complex in regard to one category are simple in regard to another. The present tense (zero tense — could be any time, present, generic, future, past) has persons, but the past (marked) has one form for all persons. In nouns, singular has genders, not the plural, which is marked.

Dative: plus peripheral and plus directional. Acc: minus peripheral, plus directional. Instr: plus peripheral, minus directional. One value of the dative is shared by acc, the other by instr. Nom is absolute zero case.

zero desinence in zero case: Nom suprug
inverse relation, (chiasmus): Nom real desinence, gen pl zero
neither case has zero desinence: sluga, slugu.

devuška and devica both mean girl. But devuška has added meaning ,virgin'.
Czech mám rád ,I love, I like' is zero, while miluji ,I love' is marked.
Miluji rodiče ,I love my parents' or mám rád rodiče
mám rád šunku ,I like ham', not miluji šunku except expressively

on — nastojaščaja masterica ,he is a real (female) master' is metaphorical exchange of signs, while ona — nastojaščij master is a normal usage.
masc is zero, fem is marked.

hypostasis. Motivated and marked use of words vs. the primary, basic function.
Attributive adjective is zero, while adj-complement or subject is hypostasis: dalekoe plenjaet nas ,the faraway fascinates'.

156) Russ has a zero copula. Latin has an expressive, alternate zero copula: deus bonus est, deus bonus (hypostasis).

Ellipsis is a deictic (anaphoric) zero.

Expressive word order in Russian: ljudi umirajut, umirajut ljudi ,people die'. But not in doč'ljubit mat' ,the daughter loves her mother' because the forms are identical, and word order is essentially neutral.

Russ ja jedu is zero, edu is marked ,I go' while in Czech it is the other way around: jedu is zero, já jedu is marked. Czech is a pro-drop language while Russ is not.

Cf. the rhetorical effect of pro drop in Russian.

Phonological accumulation: palatalized z' in Russian is an s with several positive features added (voicing and palatalization).

Correlation is an opposition between a quality and its absence. In context of a common core. Glide *jot* (j) vs. zero (initial vowel) in Russian. Ad vs. jad. Here the core is missing.

In Russ the phoneme /e/ can be preceded by a soft C but not by a paired hard C. This /e/ can be preceded by j, but cannot begin a word.

Thus the opposition of soft and hard C's is neutralized before /e/. Presence of an opposition is opposed to its absence, a zero opposition. An opposition neutralized in certain positions gives greater relief to that which unifies and distinguishes the two terms.

Written in Brno in 1938.

