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ORDER OF PRESENTATION OF GRAMMATICAL STRUCTURES IN THE
TEACHING OF RUSSIAN.

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AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE GRAMMATICAL SYSTEM OF A FOREIGN LANGUAGE GIVES THE BEGINNING STUDENT A FOUNDATION UPON WHICH THE BASIC SKILLS CAN BE DEVELOPED. THUS, THE TEACHER'S PRESENTATION OF THE TARGET LANGUAGE SHOULD ADHERE TO THE BASICALLY LINGUISTIC PRINCIPLES OF TEACHING, IN ORDER, THE BASIC FORMS, GRAMMATICAL CATEGORIES, STRUCTURES WHICH HAVE NO OR MARKEDLY DIFFERENT ENGLISH EQUIVALENTS, AND STRUCTURES OCCURRING MOST FREQUENTLY. AS AN EXAMINATION OF SEVERAL GRAMMATICAL POINTS ILLUSTRATES, THIS APPROACH IS PARTICULARLY APPLICABLE AND IMPORTANT IN TEACHING RUSSIAN WHERE, ALTHOUGH THERE ARE TRANSLATIONAL EQUIVALENCES TO ENGLISH, THERE ARE DEFINITE STRUCTURAL DIFFERENCES. TO PREVENT INTERFERENCE FROM THE STUDENT'S NATIVE TONGUE, A CAREFULLY ORGANIZED PRESENTATION OF THE WELL-DEFINED STRUCTURAL LINGUISTIC HIERARCHY OF RUSSIAN MUST BE DEVELOPED BY COOPERATIVE EFFORTS FROM BOTH THE STRUCTURAL LINGUIST AND THE LANGUAGE TEACHER. THIS ARTICLE APPEARED IN "THE SLAVIC AND EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL," VOLUME 10, NUMBER 2, SUMMER 1966, PAGES 181-190.
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Order of Presentation of Grammatical Structures in the Teaching of Russian

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When a beginning student of a foreign language makes a grammatical error¹ it is important that both student and teacher be aware of its cause. Very often that cause can be found in another language—usually the student's native language, less often another foreign language he has studied previously. Such mistakes due to interference from another language can be of two types. In the first, more common type, the student errs in carrying over patterns of English to Russian. Examples might include **Ōn pomóg otcá* < "He helped his father" [direct obj.]; **Já skazál emú přijtí* < "I told him to come"; **Ōn skazál, čto ón prišél by* < "He said he would come." More subtle are those examples of interference in which the student consciously avoids constructions which have almost exact parallels in English, feeling certain that they must be "wrong," and instead forms a construction analogical to a parallel Russian construction. These could be called instances of hypercorrectness. Examples are: **Mné gólodno* (analogy to *mné xólodno*, *mné tepló*, etc) ≠ "I am hungry"; *Ja xočú, čtoby idtí / čtoby já pošél / tudá* (analogy to *já xočú, čtoby ón pošél tudá*) ≠ "I want to go there"; etc.

But such examples of interference from a language other than Russian have another, deeper cause. More important than the factor of interference is the fact that when the student makes a grammatical (as opposed to a morphological) mistake, he generally is unaware of the real, structural meanings of the Russian constructions he is learning. The so-called reflexive verbs of Russian furnish a clear example of this. The student is almost always told that forms in *-sja* are "reflexive," i.e., that "the action is performed upon the subject of the sentence," or is "reciprocal." He is given such examples as *Já odevájus'*, *já mójus'*, *mý vstrečáemsja*, *vidimsja*, and so forth. Little wonder that the same student will later write **Bibliotéka otkryváet v vósem' časóv*, or even **Mý užé trí góda znáemsja* < "We have known each other three years." Had he been given the real meaning of the "reflexive," namely that it always marks a verb as intransitive and can often be opposed to transitive forms without the *-sja*, such a mistake might have been avoided. Similarly, the student must be told that "reflexive verbs," being intransitive, can never take a direct object; otherwise such

sentences as **Ōn boitsja etu sobáku* will result. It is therefore an oversimplification to say that these errors are due to interference from English. The true source of the error lies in an improper presentation of the basic meaning of the Russian structure.

One of the best ways of introducing the student to the basic meanings of Russian grammatical constructions is by presenting the individual points of grammar so ordered as to provide a maximal contrast of oppositions existing within Russian and to underline how these oppositions differ from the oppositions in the grammatical system of English.² The establishment of this hierarchically arranged ordering is but one of the many areas in which structural linguistics can come to the aid of the teacher of foreign languages. Such an ordering must be based upon a thorough analysis of the structures of the foreign language and the native language of the student. To a certain extent this ordering is obvious; no one would introduce the Russian preposition *dlja* before having introduced the genitive case, nor the comparative of adjectives before the underlying positive forms. But, if we regard language as a hierarchically organized, structured system (and this is the basic assumption of modern, structural linguistics), this ordering should be applied to all points of grammar; each point should occur in its proper place in the presentation. This ordering must be determined on the basis of the application of a series of at times conflicting criteria. The following four criteria, which will be discussed in greater detail below, are basically linguistic in nature and must be co-ordinated with pedagogical methodology to give the most efficient results. These principles are:

1. The basic form, i.e., that form from which we can predict all or most of the remaining forms, should be presented first.

2. Marked grammatical categories, and within the grammatical categories, marked grammemes should be presented before their unmarked counterparts.

3. In general, foreign structures which differ from the corresponding (translationally equivalent) English structures should be presented before those where the corresponding English construction is structurally identical.

4. The grammar material should be evaluated with reference to its relative importance within the language to be learned. (By relative importance is meant relative frequency, "functional load," etc.) The more important the grammatical item, the sooner it should be presented.

At every step of the presentation the student must be taught the meaning of the Russian structure and its place within the total system of Russian grammar; he should not simply be given the English translational equivalent. Just as, on the lexical level, the student is told when a Russian word, e.g., *véčer*, has no exact equivalent in English (i.e., it generally corresponds to "evening," but may also correspond to "night" as in *včera véčerom* 'last night'), so the student must be made aware of similar differences on the grammatical level.

Let us begin the discussion of our four principles by taking the Russian verbal system as an example. We shall attempt to set up a hierarchy of presentation for the two aspects, perfective and imperfective, and for the three tenses, traditionally (and to a certain extent, inaccurately) called present, past, and future. The combination of these two sets results in the following forms (based on the verb *délat'* [imperfective] and *sdélat'* [perfective]):

	Imperfective	Perfective
Present	délaju	—
Future	búdu délat'	sdélaju ³
Past	délal	sdélal

1. Basic form. The ideal basic form for the verb *délat'*, from the linguistic point of view, would be *délaj-*. By the application of a series of rules, all the remaining forms of the verb in question could be predicted.⁴ But, in presenting Russian to a beginning student, we cannot deal with such abstract constructs. We must choose a form which actually occurs, and, more importantly, that form which is given as the dictionary entry, since the use of a dictionary is one of the goals the student must achieve. The infinitive should then be the basic form. From it, in the overwhelming majority of cases, the past tense can be predicted with little difficulty (exceptions being such forms as *idti* : *šél*; *nesti* : *něs*, but *vesti* : *věl*), but it is more difficult to predict the present (perfective future) on the basis of the infinitive; cf. *smotrét'*, *smotrél* : *smotrjú*; *belét'*, *belél*, but *beléju*; *čitát'*, *čitál* : *čitáju*; *pisát'*, *pisál* : but *pišú*, etc.

But Russian verbs are learned not singly; they are learned in aspectual pairs. The student must learn *délat'*/*sdélat'*, *čitát'*/*pročitát'*, *pisát'*/*napisát'*, *rešát'*/*rešít'*, *ustráivat'*/*ustróit'*, etc. In most elementary textbooks the imperfective is taken as the basic form and the perfective is derived from it by the addition of a prefix (*s-*, *pro-*, *na-* in the first three pairs above), or by changing the verbal suffix, and, in certain instances, the stem vowel. There is absolutely no way of predicting which prefix a given verb will take, and it is equally difficult to predict what the perfectivizing suffix will be; cf. *uspevat'*, *otkryvat'*, *uznavát'*, *rešát'*, *isčezát'*, all imperfectives ending in *-át'*, with the corresponding perfectives *uspét'*, *otkrýt'*, *uznát'*, *rešít'*, *isčéznut'*. In all these examples there is certainly little predictability to be gained by taking the imperfective infinitive as the basic form, especially since almost all imperfective verbs with a prefix will end in *-at'*, *-jat'*. If we were to take *sdélat'* as our basic form, however, it would be easier to predict the imperfective; we would simply need the rule "drop the prefix to get the imperfective." Similar rules with a high degree of predictability could be supplied to derive imperfectives from such perfectives as *opisát'*, *ustróit'*, *otkrýt'*, etc.⁵

2. Within every language there exist certain obligatory grammatical categories, such as aspect, mood, voice, tense, gender, number, case. Each grammatical category can be viewed as composed of a series of underlying oppositions, which we can call grammemes. In traditional terms, the grammemes of aspect are perfective, imperfective; of tense—past, present, future; of number—singular, plural, etc. It is often most expedient to discuss the grammemes in terms of binary oppositions, as, for example, the opposition perfective/imperfective. In most instances one of the members of the opposition will be more specific than the other, indicating the obligatory presence of a certain grammatical meaning. The other member neither indicates the presence of the meaning in question nor does it deny its presence. Thus the Russian sentence *Tolstoj napisal roman "Vojna i mir"* indicates by the presence of a perfective verb that the writing of the novel was completed, and this meaning remains no matter what context is found in the sentence. The sentence *Tolstoj pisal roman "Vojna i mir"* may indicate contextually that the writing was completed (*Kto pisal etot roman? Tolstoj.*) or it may indicate contextually that the writing was not completed (*On dolgo pisal etot roman, no nikogda ne okoncil ego.*) Such an opposition is called privative, and the more specific member of the opposition is said to be "marked" with respect to the non-committal "unmarked" member. It follows that only the marked member has a definite meaning; the unmarked member must be defined in terms of the marked. If these concepts are applied to the Russian aspectual opposition perfective/imperfective, we see that if the environments of occurrence of the perfective are given, the environments not covered by that statement will be the environments of occurrence of the imperfective. The reverse, however, is not true. (We find a similar situation in phonology. It is simpler to say that the Russian letter *ž* is pronounced /š/ word finally and before voiceless consonants and /ž/ elsewhere, than to say that *ž* is pronounced /ž/ before voiced consonants, before resonants, and before vowels and /š/ elsewhere.) Since the perfective is the marked member of the aspectual opposition and because it, by its very form, gives greater predictability of other forms of the verb than the imperfective, the presentation of the perfective should precede that of the imperfective.

The choice of the perfective infinitive as basic form implies that the past tense must be presented before the present. If we examine the relationship between these two tenses we shall find that the past tense always denotes an action which occurred prior to the moment of speech, while the "present" tense can refer to past (as in the "historical present"), as well as future actions; i.e., the past tense is the marked member of the tense opposition, and its earlier introduction before the non-past ("present") satisfies our second criterion.

The presentation of the past perfective before the past imperfective

has another advantage from the viewpoint of contrastive analysis. One aspectual opposition within the English past tense is the reverse of that of Russian. In English we oppose a marked durative (he was writing) to the unmarked non-durative (he wrote). But all too often the student is led to make the equation: *ón písál* : "he was writing" = *ón napisál* : "he wrote." In reality there is no equation since Russian has no [marked] equivalent of English "was writing" and English has no [marked] equivalent of Russian *napisál*. However, *písál* and "wrote" might be equated since they are, each in its own system, unmarked. (This explains why the most common English equivalent of *Tolstój písál "Vojnú i mír"* is "Tolstoj wrote *War and Peace*.")

3. The presentation of structures which have no structural equivalent in English before those which do have such an equivalent is in many ways analogous to our second criterion. For the learner, these constructions will be more "marked"; he will need more drill on them, and the earlier he begins, the more the patterns can be reinforced. The use of the present tense in Russian in general parallels its use in English (the major exceptions being in indirect speech and the "I have been here five years" construction). The past tense in Russian, however, presents the student with grammatical categories of aspect and gender which are absent in the English verb. The introduction of the past tense before the present has the advantage of reinforcing patterns of agreement in gender and number, since the Russian past tense verb, like the adjective, has agreement for these categories, while the present does not.

4. The fourth criterion, the relative importance of a given construction, should be obvious. The Russian conditional and imperative are both more marked grammatically than the indicative, but in terms of frequency of occurrence the indicative is more important. There are also compelling morphological reasons why the presentation of the indicative must precede that of the marked moods: The student must know how to form the past tense before he can form the conditional; similarly he cannot form the imperative without being able to form the present (or perfective future) tense. Further, the past tense (and within the past tense, the perfective) is more common in occurrence in Russian than is the present or future.

As a result of the application of the four criteria, we can establish the following order of presentation of the verb: (1) past perfective; (2) past imperfective; (3) non-past imperfective (*délaju*); (4) non-past perfective (*sdélaju*); (5) future (imperfective). We can summarize some of the advantages accruing from the presentation of the past tense before the present:⁶ (a) Aspect can be introduced at the very beginning of the first year of Russian study. If it were introduced, as is most common, at the start of the second semester, the amount of drill and reinforcement of this most basic grammatical category is reduced during the first year of study by fifty per cent. (b) Reinforcement of gender/number agreement. (c) Since the past

tense is not marked for oppositions of grammatical person, there will be no impetus for the learner to omit the subject personal pronouns, a rather common mistake, often made by students who had previously studied Spanish, and a mistake which is reinforced by the fact that the forms of the present tense verb are marked for person. Students must not be allowed to make the false analogy *pišu* : "I write" = *pisál* : "I wrote." (d) The past tense is more regular in its formation than the present; it usually can be formed directly from the entry found in the dictionary, i.e., the infinitive. (e) Choosing the perfective past as the point of departure for the verbal system we achieve a high degree of predictability of the paired imperfective verb.

In presenting the concept of aspect, it must be made clear that for the Russian the use of such modifiers as *často*, *dólgo*, *káždyj dén'*, is possible only when the action is *already* viewed as imperfective. Similarly *vdrúg*, *vnezápno*, etc., can be used when an action is viewed as perfective. For the American the ordering is all too often reversed. He chooses the imperfective form of the verb when he encounters "often," "every day," "always," etc., in a sentence for translation from English into Russian. The bearer of the meaning "imperfective" is for him the adverb, not the verb. The presence of these modifiers makes the choice of aspect mechanical; the student is not forced to try to understand the basic meanings of the aspects, and thus rather than abetting the learning process, these "clues" to aspect hinder it.

The order of presentation of the Russian verbal system has been shown to correspond to the hierarchy of structures existing within Russian itself, independently of its pedagogical advantages. But sometimes the presence of a certain feature or features in the native language of the learner mitigates against a presentation mirroring the internal structure of the target language. The order of presentation of the Russian cases furnishes an example of this. The first case to be presented must, of course, be the nominative. This despite the fact that the nominative is in its meaning the least marked case.⁷ The nominative is for feminine, neuter, and a majority of masculine nouns the basic form (criterion 1). From it can be determined the gender of the noun and usually its stress pattern. Furthermore, it is the form given in the dictionary. The nominative is most clearly opposed to the accusative as the subject case to the direct object case. Nonetheless, the accusative (especially of masculine, neuter, and feminine nouns of the third declension) should not be the second case introduced. This is due not to a difference in structure between Russian and English as much as to a similarity in structure. In Russian (with the exception of animate [masculine] nouns and feminine nouns of the second declension) the direct object of an affirmative verb is formally identical to the subject, as it is in English. Compare the following:

The magazine is on the table. *Žurnál leží na stolé.*
 I see the magazine. *Já vížu žurnál.*

The student learning the accusative immediately after the nominative will make the equation "magazine" [subj.]: "magazine" [obj.] = *žurnál* [subj.]: *žurnál* [obj.], thus reinforcing an English pattern when the aim should be to introduce the student to the concept of case, a grammatical category absent from the English noun.

The prepositional case is often presented immediately after the nominative. Here, to be sure, the concept of case is introduced at an early stage. But for the American student the desinence of the prepositional case at this stage carries no meaning; in the constructions *v škole*, *na počte*, *ob Iváne*, etc., the desinence *-e* is for the student redundant. For him, the meanings are carried by the prepositions, a pattern he is already used to from English. It is not until he will be able to contrast *v škole* with *v škólu* or *o stené* 'about the wall' with *o sténu* 'against the wall' that the desinence will become a carrier of grammatical meaning for him. And it is most important that the student be trained to see the desinence. All too often, American students will read a Russian sentence such as *Sáša govorít s brátom o futbólnom máčče* as if it were **Sáša govorít s brát o futbóln máčč*, i.e., relying, as in English, on word order and prepositions to carry the grammatical meaning. The student must therefore be introduced to the concept of case not as merely a formal device, but as a marker of grammatical meaning.

The case that should follow the nominative in the presentation is the genitive. Firstly, the genitive supplies added information for predicting the other forms of masculine nouns with fleeting vowels, e.g., *amerikánc*, *amerikánca*, and masculine nouns with desinential stress, e.g., *stól*, *stolá*; *garáž*, *garažá*. No such advantage is to be gained from the accusative. Secondly, for the American student the genitive, by itself, clearly bears a grammatical meaning, unlike the accusative and locative. Once the genitive case has been introduced, its use to mark the direct object of a negated transitive verb can follow.⁸ This has the advantage of presenting the student with a pattern structurally different from the corresponding English pattern (criterion 3). The pattern learned is:

The magazine is on the table. *Žurnál leží na stolé.*
 I don't see the magazine. *Já ne vížu žurnála.*

The difference between subject and direct object is clearly marked by a difference in case. The fact that the negative construction is learned before the affirmative and is consequently drilled for a longer period of time should

help to prevent the occurrence of such sentences as **Já ne vížu žurnál*. The occurrence of such sentences as **Já vížu žurnála* after the construction with the accusative is introduced is also unlikely, since in this instance the use of the correct case form will be reinforced by the similar English construction.

With the prior introduction of the genitive, the learning of the forms of the accusative of nouns with no desinence in the nominative or with the desinence *-o*, *-e*, becomes quite simple. The rule is: If masculine animate, accusative = genitive. Otherwise, accusative = nominative.

Another application of our third (and second) criterion is afforded by the possessive pronouns of the third person. All too often the student is allowed to make the correlation *egó* = "his," *eě* = "her," *ix* = "their" before he is introduced to Russian *svój*, *svojá*, *svoě*. Upon encountering the reflexive possessive pronoun he is forced to unlearn his previous correlation and learn to discriminate between *svój* and *egó*, *eě*, *ix*. The reflexive possessive pronoun is marked with respect to the remaining possessive forms in that its antecedent can only be the subject of the clause in which it occurs. There is no such restriction on the remaining possessive pronouns. Further, the reflexive possessive adjective has no real obligatory equivalent in English. It therefore must be learned before the unmarked possessive pronouns. The rules are quite simple: when the thing "possessed" belongs to the subject of the clause, *svój*, *svojá*, *svoě* must be used. Elsewhere *mój*, *tvój*, *náš*, *váš*, *egó*, *eě*, *ix* are used.

In learning Russian the student must be aware that there are two levels of equivalencies between Russian and English. If we examine the following sets of sentences:

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------------|
| (1) I was hungry. | <i>Já byl góloden.</i> |
| (2) I was hot. | <i>Mné bylo žárko.</i> |

we will see that although the English and Russian of (1) and (2) are translationally (i.e., semantically) equivalent there is a structural or grammatical equivalency only between the members of the first set. The student must learn that the Russian does not say, structurally, "I was hot," but rather says "To-me was hot." Similar examples of a lack of structural equivalence include *mné nrávijsja*, *mné núžen*, *u menjá (ést')*, etc. Due to the usual insistence that the student translate Russian into "idiomatic, grammatical English," he loses sight of the structural differences between the English and Russian constructions, and, as a consequence, is often tempted to replace the correct *mné*, *u menjá* with the nominative *já*, e.g., **Já nrávljus' ètot fíl'm*, **Já núžen nóvoe pal'tó*, etc. It would perhaps be useful to have the student give a double translation from Russian into English: first a structural ("literal") translation and then a semantic ("idiomatic, grammatical English") one.

Another major cause of student errors in translations from English to Russian can be ascribed not so much to a difference in patterns between the two languages or to an ill-advised order of presentation, but rather to what can be called a deliberate attempt on the part of the textbook author to lead the unwary student into a trap. This occurs when sentences for translation chosen do not correspond to the desired Russian structure while structurally more equivalent English constructions do occur. Some examples are: "He works Fridays" may result in **Ōn rabótáet pjátnicy* (or *pjátnicami*) since the English construction is prepositionless; "He works *on* Fridays" is less likely to be translated incorrectly. "He said he would come" traps the student into omitting *čto* in translation; "He said *that* he would come" presents no temptation to omit the needed conjunction. "He would often read all night" is more likely to result in **Ōn částo čítál by vsjú nóč'* than is "He often read (or "used to read") all night." "It is important that he understand everything," with the English subjunctive, corresponds more closely to the desired Russian sentence than "that he understands . . ." would. "He often has breakfast at a restaurant" is more likely to result in **U negó částo závtrak v restoráne* than is "He often breakfasts . . ." Such examples can easily be multiplied. Their abundance in beginning Russian textbooks seems to imply that exercises for translation from English to Russian have the art of translation as their basic goal rather than the aim of drilling the student in the active use of the grammatical constructions he is learning.

It may seem that the above implies the need for teaching the beginning student of Russian some basic principles of structural linguistics, at least insofar as they apply to Russian. But this is exactly what the teacher must attempt to do. The student has as his goal the acquisition of the *structure* of a foreign language, for without that structure he cannot read, understand, speak, or write. And linguistics is the study of the structure of languages. The student is willy-nilly learning "linguistics," i.e., structure, when he studies Russian; this is axiomatic and inevitable. It remains only for him to be taught the real structure, the real system, or, in simpler terms, what the Russian forms really mean. This is where the structural linguist must make his contribution, in co-operation with the language teacher. To divorce language teaching from linguistics can only lead to the presentation of inaccurate (if not false) statements of grammar.

NOTES

- 1 Excluded from discussion here are what could be called "formal errors," i.e., misspelled word, improperly conjugated verbs, improperly declined nouns, adjectives, etc. Thus **Já čytáju rússkyj žjurnál* would contain three formal errors and no "grammatical" errors, while **Já ne vížu svóej xoróšuju továrišč* contains three grammatical errors but no formal ones.

- 2 Questions of ordering apply not only to grammatical categories but also to individual lexical items. Examples of this include the relative order of presentation of Russian *li*-constructions and interrogative intonation patterns on the one hand and the verb (*s*)*délat'* on the other. If the last is introduced first there is a great likelihood of the student producing such sentences as **Délaet Iván čítát' knigu?* <“Does John read the book?” If the student learns *čítáet li . . . ?* first, and learns at the same time that it is equivalent, i.e., to English interrogative constructions with *do, does, did*, when he is introduced to *délat'* there is a lesser probability that he will use that verb in place of *li*.
- 3 As will be seen below, the so-called “present tense” can refer to past, present, and future actions. But so can the so-called perfective “future.” For examples of the perfective future used to refer to non-future events, see Dennis Ward, *The Russian Language Today* (Chicago [c. 1965]), 241-242. In fact, if one were to carefully investigate the differences between forms such as *dajú* and *dám*, *rešáju* and *rešú*, etc., it would soon be evident that the relationship between them is the same as that between *davál* and *dál*, *rešál* and *rešíl*, i.e., purely aspectual. Russian does have a future tense, but it is formed only from imperfective verbs, with the auxiliary *búdu*: *búdu davát'*, *búdu rešát'*, etc.
- 4 R. Jakobson, “Russian Conjugation,” *Word*, IV (1948), 155-164.
- 5 The question may well be asked, how can one tell when the prefix is dropped and when there is a change in suffix. In the case of *napisát'*, the first operation is employed, resulting in *pisát'*; for *opisát'* the second operation is performed, and we get *opisyvat'*. Perhaps the best solution to this question is to talk about two separate processes of aspect formation in contemporary Russian: (1) *perfectivization*, i.e., the change of aspect of an *unprefixed imperfective* verb, e.g., *pisat'*, to perfective by the addition of *any* prefix, e.g., *napisát'*, *opisát'*, *perepisát'*, *pripisát'*, etc. This prefix changes not only the aspect of the verb, but also its meaning. In a few instances the change in meaning is so slight as to be negligible. Such is the case of *napisát'*, which can be viewed as differing from *pisát'* only in aspect. (2) *Imperfectization*, i.e., the change of aspect of a *perfective* verb, which may be prefixed as *opisát'* or unprefixed as *rešít'*, by a change in the suffix, e.g., *opisyvat'*, *rešát'*. Here there is only a change in aspect; there is no concomitant change in lexical meaning. For a further discussion of this approach, see Ю. С. Маслов, “Глагольный вид в современном болгарском литературном языке (значение и употребление),” «Вопросы грамматики болгарского литературного языка» (М., 1959), 165-202.
- 6 It should be noted that the choice of the past as the first tense introduced implies the prior presentation of the grammatical categories of gender and number in the nominal system.
- 7 See Roman Jakobson, “Beitrag zur allgemeinen Kasuslehre,” *Travaux du Cercle linguistique de Prague*, VI (1936), 240-288.
- 8 Concomitantly with the introduction of the genitive case the use of prepositions taking a specific case can be introduced. The student should be simultaneously introduced to the “derived conjunctive form,” i.e., along with *do* + gen. he should learn *do togó, kak . . .*, lest he produce such sentences as **do Pětr prišěl* ‘Before Peter came.’ It should be emphasized that prepositions such as *do* must always be followed by the genitive, while the subject of the verb *prišěl* must *always* be in the nominative. Further the object of the preposition is not *Peter*, but rather *his coming*, which is expressed by a verb, which cannot be made into a genitive form. Thus the preposition takes an “empty object” pronoun referring to the action.