

Diathesis: Some Extended Applications of the Term

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Résumé

La première définition exacte de la notion de diathèse est due à Mel'cuk et Xolodovic en 1970. La diathèse se révèle utile dans l'établissement de correspondances entre les niveaux de représentation sémantique et syntaxique. La sphère d'application de cette notion s'est maintenant largement étendue. Dans cet article, nous examinons des phénomènes où cette notion est d'un usage profitable.

Abstract

The notion of diathesis was given an exact definition by Mel'cuk and Xolodovic in 1970. Diathesis proved useful in establishing correspondences between semantic and syntactic levels of representation. The sphere of application of this notion has now widened significantly. In this paper some phenomena are examined where this notion can be profitably used.

Keywords – Mots Clés

diathèse, alternance, référence, possesseur externe, dissociation

diathesis, alternation, reference, external Possessor, splitting

Introduction

The notion of DIATHESIS was given an insightful definition in Mel'čuk & Xolodovič 1970 (see also Mel'čuk 1998) in connection with the problem of voice. Diathesis was defined as a correspondence between entities of semantic and syntactic level; we can now say, between semantic roles of participants of the situation and their syntactic positions.

A verb may have different diatheses in its different uses: it may change its diathesis. Now voice is a diathetic shift morphologically marked in the verb form. If we have at our disposal such roles as Agent and Patient; and such syntactic positions as Subject (*Sbj*), Object (*Obj*) and Periphery (*Periph*) – for oblique cases and PPs, we can represent a diathetic shift from Active, in (Ia), into Passive, in (Ib), by rule (I*):

- (I) a. Razbojniki *ubili* krest'janina 'the robbers *killed* the peasant';
 b. Krest'janin *byl ubit* razbojnikami 'the peasant *was killed* by the robbers'.
 (I*) $\langle \text{Agent-Sbj, Patient-Obj} \rangle \Rightarrow \langle \text{Patient-Obj, Agent-Periph} \rangle$.

Example (II) demonstrates a diathetic shift which is not marked morphologically:

- (II) a. Ja *namazal* povidlo na xleb 'I *spread* jam on the bread';
 b. Ja *namazal* xleb povidlom 'I *smear*ed the bread with jam'.
 (II*) $\langle \text{Agent-Sbj, Means-Obj, Place-Periph} \rangle \Rightarrow \langle \text{Agent-Sbj, Place-Obj, Means-Periph} \rangle$.

As a rule, among different diatheses of one and the same verb there is one that can be called PRIMARY; in examples (I) and (II) it is, correspondingly, (Ia) and (IIa). This is why I prefer to speak about SHIFTS rather than ALTERNATIONS – which is also a useful term.

Transformational grammar of the 60's and 70's ignored the fact that diathetic shifts are connected with meaning changes. For example, active and passive constructions were treated as synonymous. This simplification doesn't seem reasonable nowadays: any diathetic shift, i.e. change in syntactic positions of participants, is accompanied by a non-ignorable change of meaning, be it pragmatics or semantics or the lexicon. What is common for all diathetic shifts is a change in syntactic (and, presumably, communicative) rank of the participants, i.e. in the participant's place in topicality hierarchy (see, e.g., Croft 1991: 151). In fact, sentence (Ia) speaks about robbers, and (Ib) is about a peasant. Four ranks are to be distinguished: CENTER (namely, SUBJECT and OBJECT), PERIPHERY, and OFF SCREEN, see examples below.

1 Direct and indirect diathesis

In the recent decades, the sphere of application of the term diathesis has broadened. For example, the relationship between direct and indirect diathesis (a distinction introduced in Padučeva 2000) may be treated as a diathetic shift. So, the verb form *vybrali* 'elected' has a direct diathesis in (1a), where the Result of the election is openly named, by the direct Object, and an INDIRECT DIATHESIS in (1b) where the Result of the election is not named and cannot be named (it is Off Screen), its position being occupied by the participant Parameter:

- (1) a. Americancy *vybrali* prezidentom Busha; b. Americancy *vybrali* prezidenta.

The notion of indirect diathesis has made it possible to uncover an important linguistic phenomenon – namely, a correlation between diathesis and aspect. In fact, in the context of an indirect diathesis, as in *vybirajut prezidenta*, the Imperfective may have its ordinary meaning of activity which is going on; while in *vybirajut prezidentom Busha*, the direct diathesis, the Imperfective can only be understood in the meaning of *praesens historicum*.

2 Diathesis and the Figure of the Observer

The idea of the Observer was introduced in Apresjan 1986. One of his examples was

- (2) Na doroge *pokazalsja* vsadnik [$\approx$ 'a rider appeared in the field of view of the Observer'].

The Observer can be treated as an Experiencer in the rank Off Screen. Example (3) gives an idea of how the Observer can be looked upon as the result of a diathetic shift:

- (3) a. Oxotnik *obnaruzil* na opushke sledy medvedja [Experiencer-Sbj];
 b. Na opushke *obnaruzilis'* sledy medvedja [Experiencer-Off Screen];
 c. Medved' ne *obnaruzival* priznakov žizni [Experiencer-Off Screen].

3 Splitting of possessive NPs and external Possessor

In Iordanskaja & Mel'čuk 1995 constructions with the so-called splitting of Genitive noun phrases in Russian (as in *Glaza Maši sijajut – U Maši sijajut glaza*) were studied. I claim that splitting of a Genitive noun phrase (GNP) can be treated as a special type of diathetic shift.

3.1 Genitive noun phrases

A Genitive noun phrase¹ (when looked upon from the perspective of dependency grammar) consists of a HEAD and a subordinated GENITIVE, be it a single noun in the Genitive case or a noun phrase with a Genitive head. Splitting of a GNP can be illustrated by examples (1), (2); what is a single NP in (1a), (2a), is split into two syntactically independent constituents in (1b), (2b) (square brackets here and below denote constituents corresponding to dependency relations in accordance with Padučeva 1964):

- (1) a. [Syn Maši Smith] [pošel v školu]
[son-Nom Maša-Gen Smith] [went to school]
'Masha Smith's son began his school studies';
b. [U Maši Smith] [syn] [pošel v školu]
[At Maša-Gen Smith] [son-Nom] [went to school]
'Masha Smith, <her> son began his school studies'.
(2) a. [Žaloby etoj ženščiny] [mne nadoeli]
[complaints-Nom this-Gen woman-Gen] [I-Dat annoyed]
'complaints of this woman annoyed me';
b. [Eta ženščina] [nadoela mne] [svoimi žalobami]
[this-Nom woman-Nom] [annoyed I-Dat] [her-Instr complaints-Instr]
'this woman annoyed me with her complaints'.

Assuming that Genitive phrases express a possessive relation – in a broad sense – we can call the head of a GNP a POSSESSED and the Genitive a POSSESSOR; this terminology is used, e.g., in Payne, Barshi 1999. Then, according to Kibrik 2000, we have in (1b) a construction with the Possessor EXTRAPOSED (from the GNP) into a topical, i.e. thematic, position as *u Maši Smith* in (1b) (the Possessed *syn* remains in its place), and (2b) exemplifies a construction with the Possessor (*ženščina*) RAISED (from the subordinate to the head position in the GNP) (*ženščina*) and the Possessed (*svoimi žalobami*) extraposed into a peripheral position. In both cases the result is a construction with EXTERNAL POSSESSOR.

The construction with external Possessor and extraposition of the Possessed were analyzed at length in Arutjunova 1976: 156–161, on such examples as:

- (3) [Ego povedenie] menja udivilo ⇒ [On] udivil menja [svoim povedeniem]
'his behavior annoyed me' ⇒ 'he annoyed me with his behavior';
(4) [Veličie gor] poražajet ⇒ [Gory] poražajut [svoim veličiem]
'splendor of mountains startles' ⇒ 'mountains startle with their splendor'.

In Padučeva 1974: 235 the construction represented by such examples as (1b) was interpreted syntactically as a special diathesis of a verb, namely, as a diathesis with a determinant (the

¹ Noun phrases with a possessive pronoun behave, in all relevant respects, in the same way as Genitive phrases; namely, they obey the same rules of splitting: *moj syn pošel – u menja syn pošel v školu* 'my son began his school studies'; *tvoi žaloby mne nadoeli – ty svoimi žalobami mne nadoela* 'your complaints annoyed me'.

term DETERMINANT OF A SENTENCE belongs to N.Ju. Shvedova; it is mentioned, in connection with GNP splitting, in Iordanskaja, Mel'čuk 1995: 139). This term is at place in the context of examples (1) – (4) because the Possessor in its initial syntactic position inside the NP belongs to the Subject NP; meanwhile being in the position of a determinant it has the whole sentence as its scope; in particular, it serves as a controller for all zero substitutes of the sentence:

(5) [Mat' *Peti*_i] [zarabatyvaet bol'se, čem *ego*_i otec] ⇒

'Peter's mother earns more than his father'

[U *Peti*_i] [mat' Ø_i zarabatyvaet bol'se, čem otec Ø_i]

lit. 'at Peter mother earns more than father'.

In Boguslavskij 1996: 444 a determinant is treated as a «world-creating operator». In fact, a determinant specifies a world where all relational terms depend, referentially, on one and the same object – namely, that denoted by the determinant.

This type of splitting is analyzed at length in Iordanskaja & Mel'čuk 1995: 150 on the example of possessive NPs with names of body parts as head nouns. They call this splitting FOCALIZATION.

I propose to treat split possessive NPs as resulting from diathetic shifts. In fact, in splitting, as well as in the case of a classical diathetic change, the correspondence between semantic roles and syntactic positions of participants changes at least twice. In (1), (2), for example, two changes took place: 1) the possessive valency of the head noun remains unsaturated; and 2) the verb acquires an additional syntactic position, namely, that of a Possessor. In (1) *pošel* dominates the Possessor *u Maši Smith*; in (2) *nadoeli* dominates the Possessed *svoimi žalobami*). See also example (6) (from Padučeva 1974: 235); when used in the determinant diathesis the verb *sootvetstvujut* has an additional (as compared with the dictionary predicted set of semantic roles) syntactic slot – for a determinant (= external Possessor); on the contrary, the verb's arguments lose their syntactic valencies: whose *syntaksičeskie valentnosti* and whose *semantičeskie aktanty* – this is conveyed by the determinant *u narečij*:

(6) a. *Syntaksičeskie valentnosti narečij ne sootvetstvujut ix semantičeskim aktantam*

'syntactic valencies of adverbs do not correspond to their semantic arguments' ⇒

b. *U narečij syntaksičeskie valentnosti ne sootvetstvujut semantičeskim aktantam*

lit. 'at adverbs syntactic valencies do not correspond to semantic arguments'.

The difference between ordinary and split diatheses is sometimes marked by a reflexive particle, see examples in (7), (8) (used to illustrate some other point in Apresjan 1974):

(7) *Golova kukly vraščaetsja ⇒ Kukla vraščaet golovoj*

'the doll's head rolls' ⇒ 'the doll rolls its head' ;

(8) *Napravlenie vetra izmenilos' ⇒ Veter izmenil napravlenie*

'the direction of the wind changed' ⇒ 'the wind changed the direction'.

Not every Genitive phrase can be subjected to splitting, and not in any context splitting is possible. The most important necessary condition is stativity of the predicate. For example, in (1) the construction with external Possessor is only possible because *pošel* 'went' is used in a kind of stative meaning 'now goes to school' (stativity of the predicate is mentioned in this respect in Weiss 1999). Cf. stative predicate in (9a), where splitting is possible, and non-stative predicate in (9b):

(9) a. [U *Maši Smith*] [*muž*] [*pisatel'*]

‘Masha Smith, <her> husband is a writer’.

b. *[U Maši Smith] [muž] [podaril mne svoju knigu]

‘Masha Smith, <her> husband gave me his book as a present’.

Splitting in (10a) is only possible because *vyxodit* ‘to come out’ is used in its stative meaning:

(10) a. Okna gostinicy *vyxodjat* na jug ; b. Gostinica *vyxodit* oknami na jug.

A Russian GNP can undergo splitting in the position of the Subject, Object and topical Modifier. Splitting in the position of the Object is highly lexicalized. We shall limit ourselves to the positions of topical Subject and topical Modifier, as in (14) below.

3.2 What is the contribution of GNP splitting to the semantic interpretation of a sentence?

The question is, what is the motivation for GNP splitting; in other words, what is the contribution of GNP splitting to the semantic interpretation of a sentence.

Splitting is a kind of diathetic change, and as such it must be related to a change of the sentence’s communicative structure (the fact that in general diathetic alternations change communicative rank of participants is now beyond doubts, see Mel’čuk 1998: 173). But there is more than that.

In Kibrik 2000 the effect of splitting is described with the help of the notion empathy focus (Chafe 1976; Kuno, Kaburaki 1977: empathy is defined as «the speaker’s identification, with varying degrees, <...> with a person who participates in the event»). But there are two other notions that seem to be of more use: AUTONOMOUS REFERENCE (Keenan 1976) and DEPENDENT REFERENCE (Padučeva 1985: 151), in particular, argument dependent reference. For example, the word *syn* ‘son’ (as other RELATIONAL NAMES, such as *pričina* ‘cause’, *kraj* ‘edge’) lack autonomous reference; in (1a) *syn* referentially depends on the NP *Maša Smith*, which is referentially autonomous. Note that referential dependence of *syn* on *Maša Smith* remains in (1b) where these words are not syntactically connected.

Keenan considers autonomous reference to be one of the features of a prototypical subject. Probably, this feature of the subject is a consequence of its preferably topical position in the beginning of a sentence. Then it is reasonable to suppose that there is a more general principle of sentence structure – namely that of «referential compactness»:

Referentially autonomous noun (in particular, a noun the reference of which is known to the speakers) must be introduced into the denotative space of the utterance earlier than the nouns it referentially depends upon.

A sentence conforms to the Principle of referential compactness in the maximum degree if it has a unique «referential root» on which all its non-autonomous terms directly or non-directly depend and which occupies a topical position in the sentence. In Russian there are three types of topical positions: subject, as, e.g., in (2b); *U*-determinant, as in (1b); and that of a NP promoted to the beginning of a sentence, as in (11b):

- (11) a. [Muž Maši_i] [pobil ee_i]
 husband-Nom Masha-Gen_i beat-Past she-Acc_i
 ‘Masha’s husband beat her’;
 b. [Mašu_i pobil] [ee_i muž]
 Maša-Acc_i beat-Past she-Gen_i husband-Nom

‘Masha, her husband beat her’.

Sentence (1b) is better than (1a) because the Possessor, on which the noun *syn* referentially depend, is in the topical position of an *U*-determinant; (2b) is better than (2a) because the Possessor is moved to the position of the subject. And (11b) is better than (11a) because the word order change promotes the Possessor (Object) to the sentence initial position.

The degree of compactness is even higher if the REFERENTIAL ROOT (in a topical position) is simultaneously an anaphoric root controlling pronouns, as in (11b), and zero anaphora, as in (12b):

- (12) a. Sintaksičeskie valentnosti *narečij_i* ne sootvetstvujut *ix_i* semantičeskim aktantam
 ‘syntactic valencies of these adverbs do not correspond to their semantic arguments’;
 b. *U narečij_i* sintaksičeskie valentnosti $\emptyset_i$ ne sootvetstvujut semantičeskim aktantam $\emptyset_i$
 ‘syntactic arguments of these adverbs do not correspond to their semantic arguments’.

The principle of referential compactness plays an important role in sentences with quantifier adjectives; (5b), for example, is essentially better than (5a):

- (13) a. Bissektrisa ugla pri veršine *vsjakogo ravnobedrennogo treugol’nika_i* javljaetsja *ego_i* os’ju simmetrii ‘The bisector of the apex angle of every isosceles triangle is its symmetry axis’;
 b. *U vsjakogo ravnobedrennogo treugol’nika_i* bissektrisa ugla pri veršine $\emptyset_i$ javljaetsja os’ju simmetrii $\emptyset_i$ ‘In every isosceles triangle the bisector of the apex angle is its symmetry axis’.

In (14) not only the noun *storona* ‘side’ depends on the focal noun *treugol’nik* ‘triangle’, but also *naibol’šij ugol* ‘the largest angle’:

- (14) a. [Protiv naibol’šej storony *treugol’nika_i*] [ležit naibol’šij *ego_i* ugol]
 ‘in front of the biggest side of the triangle lies its biggest angle’ $\Rightarrow$
 b. [U *treugol’nika_i*] [protiv naibol’šej storony $\emptyset_i$ ležit naibol’šij ugol $\emptyset_i$]
 ‘in a triangle in front of the biggest side lies the biggest angle’.

Note 1. Another area where referential dependencies are at play is reflexivization: circularity of referential dependencies (as in *the son of his father*; *the servant of his landlord*) leads to referential failure; it is referentially invalidated – incapable of concrete reference, see Padučeva 1985: 203. Cf. Bach-Peters paradox.

Thus, the notion of referential dependency makes it possible to state the conditions on GNP splitting in both adequate and sufficiently general form.

The notion of empathy focus is demonstrated in Kuno, Kaburaki 1977 on possessive groups with a personal noun phrase in the role of the Possessor. And in this context it is of no use. For example, (16a) is better than (16b) not because the speaker identifies herself with John but because *John*, referentially autonomous noun, occupies in (16a) the thematic position:

- (16) a. John hit his wife; b. Mary’s husband hit her.

Indeed, the same phenomenon can be demonstrated on verbs with non-personal participants; for example, (17a) is better than (17b):

- (17) a. Sobytie bolee važno, čem ego pričina ‘the event is more important than its reason’;
 b. Pričina sobytija menee važna, čem samo sobytie
 ‘the reason of the event is less important than the event itself’.

And here the notion of empathy cannot be applied at all: if participants are not human beings then who the speaker will identify herself with? Whose point of view s/he can take? The crucial question is: where does the speaker come from?

It can be maintained that the speaker takes part in the definition of the topic. But if we make resort to communicative terms it would rather be the hearer who must be taken into account than the speaker. In fact, it is easier for the hearer to calculate reference of all referential terms in the utterance if s/he begins with referentially autonomous term in the topical position.

The notion of empathy being defined with insufficient precision, it is sometimes mixed up with the notion of Observer. For example, in Israeli 1997: 24 the difference between two meanings of *terjat'sja* 'be lost' is ascribed to the difference in the Speaker's empathy:

- (18) a. Kogda my s Maksimom xodim v univermag, on vseгда *terjaetsja*
'when Maxim and I go to the supermarket he always gets lost';
b. Kogda ja vxožu v etot ogromnyj univermag, ja vseгда *terjajus'*
'when I enter this huge supermarket I am always at a loss'.

Meanwhile it is sufficient to say that two different meanings of *terjat'sja* show themselves in these examples (both registered in dictionaries of Russian). The first, exemplified by (18a), belongs to the semantic field of perception and presupposes, in the context of the overt Experiencer absent, a covert Observer. Indeed, *poterjalsja* 'got lost' as well as *našelsja* 'was found', presupposes a person who first had something in his/her field of vision and then ceased to have (or vice versa). In its second meaning, as in (18b), the verb *terjat'sja* denotes emotion: X *poterjalsja* means 'X doesn't know what to do'; no external Observer is presupposed – everything takes place within the Subject's consciousness.

The notion of Observer mentioned earlier is much more sophisticated and much better elaborated than empathy.

3.3 Splitting in the domain of psych verbs

Splitting of GNP is widely spread in the class of emotion verbs. What goes on in the Subject GNP in example (1) is Possessor Raising:

- (1) a. [Stat'ja Johna v «Times»] *obidela* menja ⇒
'John's article in «Times» *offended* me'
b. [John] *obidel* menja [svoej stat'ej v «Times»]
'John *offended* me with his article in «Times»'.

Diathetic change in example (1) can be represented by (1*):

- (1*) a. <Causer-Subject, Experiencer-Object> ⇒
b. <Possessor-Subject, Experiencer-Object, Possessed-Periphery>.

Genitive NP in (1a) consists of the Possessor (*John*) and the Possessed (*stat'ja v «Times»*). As a result of Possessor Raising the Possessor becomes the Subject while the Possessed becomes a peripheral NP in the Instrumental case.

Splitting of a possessive NP is also possible in the position of the Object:

- (2) a. Ja *obidelsja* [na stat'ju Johna v «Times»]
'I *got offended* by John's article in «Times»' ⇒
b. Ja *obidelsja* [na Johna] [za ego stat'ju v «Times»]
'I *got offended* at John for his article in «Times»'.

Sentence (2a) is derived from (1a) by what may be called EMOTIVE DECAUSATIVIZATION – the derivation yielding a reflexive verb from a non-reflexive one. And (2b) can be accounted for as a split of a GNP (occupying the Object position *na*+Acc) in (2a): the Possessor *John* is raised to the rank of a direct dependent of the verb, and the Possessed *stat'ja* is extraposed to a peripheral position.

The role of the *na*+Acc Object in (2a) is Causer, so that *obidet'sja* in (2a) has a diathesis <Experiencer-Subject, Causer-Object>; while *obidet'sja* in (2b) has a split diathesis <Experiencer-Subject, Possessor-Object, Possessed-Periphery>.

Participants Possessor and Possessed can be called, from the point of view of their role in the situation, correspondingly, the Target (of emotion) and the Aspect. In (2b) *John* is the Target, the role of *stat'ja v «Times»* can be identified as Aspect.

Note 2. The term Target (Rus. *mišen'*), denoting the result of splitting the propositional contents of emotion into its logical subject and predicate, is due to Arutjunova 1976: 163. In Pesetsky 1995: 56 the term is used differently: terms Causer and Target of emotion denote what we think to be one and the same role, the difference is that «Causer is always associated with the *subject* position, and Target associated with the *object* position». For example, the NP *the article in «Times»* in *Bill was angry at the article in «Times»* is called Target, while in *The article in «Times» angered Bill* it is a Causer.

Splitting of a GNP in the Object position is much less productive: it is only normal for several verbs – *rasserdit'sja*, *razgnevat'sja*, *razozlit'sja* 'to get angry', *obidet'sja* 'to be offended'. In Arutjunova 1976: 161 these verbs are treated as a special class of HUMAN-ORIENTED emotions and distinguished from other emotion verbs, which are event-oriented, such as *ogorčit'sja*. But outside verbs of emotion it is sufficiently widespread, cf. Object splitting in the context of a speech act verb:

[Orator osudil] [legkomyslennye obeščanija Berlusconi]
 'the speaker blamed Berlusconi for light-minded promises' ⇒
 [Orator osudil [Berlusconi] [za legkomyslennye obeščanija]
 'the speaker blamed light-minded promises by Berlusconi'.

Thus, the proposed interpretation of the diathesis in (2b) as generated by splitting seems plausible despite the fact that the «intermediary» structure (2a) with non-split Object is on the verge of ungrammaticality. Indeed, in Russian one is usually angry with a human, not an object.

One can put the following question: if Causer and Target are different participants of the situation «emotion» then the corresponding NPs must be compatible; they should be able to co-occur in the context of one and the same verb. Meanwhile sentence (3), where Causer and Target go together, is not correct:

(3) **Stat'ja v «Times» rasserdila menja na Johna*
 'the article in «Times» *angered* me with John'.

Our analysis, which treats (2b), with the participant Target, as the result of a split, gives a simple solution to this problem: Target appears in a sentence as the result of splitting the participant Causer; this is why it is incompatible with the Causer.

In general, syntactic position of *na*+Acc exists only in the context of a decausative, i.e. a reflexive verb. This explains a series of examples from Pesetsky 1995: 60. Cf. (4a) and (4b):

- (4) a. *The article in «Times» *angered* John at the government
cf. Rus.: *Stat'ja v «Times» *rasserdila* Johna na pravitel'stvo;
b. The article in «Times» made John *angry* at the government
cf. Rus.: Stat'ja v «Times» *zastavila* Johna *rasserdit'sja* na pravitel'stvo.

Russian translations make the situation transparent: in (4a) we have a causative verb *anger* – *rasserdit'*, which provides no syntactic position for Target; while in (b), in the context of a decausative, *make angry* – *zastavit' rasserdit'sja*, such a position comes into being.

A legitimate question in connection with (4) would be as follows. Why splitting of a GNP, e.g., in (5'), gives a structure with the Target (*John*) in the Subject position and Aspect (*stat'ja v «Times»*) in the periphery – why the opposite is impossible, see (5'') with Aspect in Subject position and Target in the periphery?

- (5') Stat'ja Johna v «Times» *menja rasserdila*
'John's article in «Times» *angered* me;
(5'') John *rasserdil* *menja* svoej stat'ej v «Times»
'John *angered* me with his article in «Times»';
(5''') *Stat'ja v «Times» *rasserdila* *menja* na Johna
'John's article in «Times» *angered* me at John'.

This question has an answer. Of the two successors of the Causer, Target and Aspect, the privilege of acquiring the rank of the Subject, i.e. the topical rank, belongs to the Target: the Target and the Aspect are connected semantically as the Subject and the Predicate; thus, communicatively as topic and focus correspondingly, see Apresjan 1974: 154.

There is another reason for this division of communicative ranks between Target and Aspect: according to the criterion introduced in section 2, the Possessor must occupy more topical position than the Possessed because the Possessed referentially depends upon the Possessor. For example, in a genitive NP *stat'ja Johna* the word *John* denotes a concrete object and is referentially autonomous; while *stat'ja Johna* referentially depends on *John*: the word *stat'ja* has a reference only in this (or some other reference creating) context.

Note that examples (6a-c), from Pesetsky 1995: 63, present no difficulty for our approach; they can be treated as the result of splitting of a GNP into perfectly compatible constituents Target and Aspect:

- (6) a. Sue is angry with Bill about the party [= 'angry with Bill's party'];
b. John is irritated at Mary about the mistake [= 'irritated at Mary's mistake'];
c. What Mary hates about Sue is her stubbornness [= 'Mary hates Sue's stubbornness'].

Thus, the correspondence between roles and positions turns out to be a complex one when we look at it from the nearer distance. Diathetic approach helps in a wide range of cases where Projection Principle fails. But even diathetic technique, which is based on the assumption of changing one-to-one correspondence between roles and positions, cannot do all the job.

Still there is always a hope that new regularities can be detected on the ruins of those rejected.

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