When Russian is More Perfective Than Spanish

Antonio Fabregas, *UiT, The Arctic University of Norway*
antonio.fabregas@uit.no

Laura Alexis Janda, *UiT, The Arctic University of Norway*
laura.janda@uit.no

ABSTRACT

In this article we analyze cases in which Spanish imperfective aspect is equivalent to Russian perfective forms, a topic that has received very little attention in the literature. We argue that a crucial difference between perfectives in the two languages is the relevance of the starting point of the event. Russian adopts an aspectual perspective from within an extended event, which gives access to the initial boundary to determine that an event is not unbounded; Spanish adopts a perspective from outside the event, and evaluates therefore only whether there is a closing boundary or not. The mismatches studied here derive from this difference, and also from the independent fact that Russian expresses aspectual distinctions independently from mood, while Spanish uses imperfective aspect to express some modal notions.

Keywords: perfective, imperfective, onset boundaries, states, modals.

RESUMEN

En este trabajo analizamos casos en que el imperfectivo español equivale a un perfectivo ruso, un tema que ha recibido poca atención en la bibliografía. Argumentamos que la diferencia crucial entre los perfectivos de ambas lenguas es la relevancia del límite inicial de la eventualidad. El ruso adopta una perspectiva interna al evento, por lo que puede acceder al límite inicial para determinar que el evento está delimitado, mientras que el español adopta una perspectiva externa al evento, lo que le lleva a evaluar un evento como no delimitado si falta el límite final. Las faltas de equivalencia estudiadas aquí derivan de esta diferencia, así como del hecho independiente de que el ruso expresa las distinciones aspectuales con independencia del modo, mientras que el español usa el imperfectivo para expresar ciertas nociones modales.

Palabras clave: perfectivo, imperfectivo, límites iniciales, estados, modales.

1. Introduction

The goal of this article is to explore some differences in the way that Russian and Spanish conceptualize the notions of perfective and imperfective aspect. In order to achieve this goal, we concentrate on a type of mismatch which, to the best of our knowledge, has not been explored in any detail in previous research: examples where the Spanish imperfective aspect is equivalent (symbolized as ≈) to Russian perfective forms.[20]

In previous work (Janda & Fábregas, 2019), we concentrated on cases where a Spanish perfective corresponds to a Russian imperfective as in (1).

(1)
***Leyó*-pfv** *toda la noche, ajeno a los ronquidos de las religiosas y a las estaciones fugaces*

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[20] The Spanish progressive and perfect (cf. comparisons with Russian aspect in Gorbova 2010 & 2014) are beyond the scope of the present article.

en la niebla. [S42:21]

On čital-**ipfv** *vs-ju noč' naprolet, ne zame*čaja ni xrapa svoix sputnic, ni mel*'kanija okutannyx dymkoj stancij.* [R26:35]

'He **read** all night, unaware of the nuns' snoring or of the stations that flashed by in the fog.'[21]

We have argued (Janda & Fábregas, 2019) that a crucial difference between Spanish and Russian aspect has to do with perspective: Spanish adopts an event-external perspective, while Russian takes an event-internal perspective. In (1) this difference is highlighted by the notion of duration (here expressed as 'all night'): any duration of an event, no matter how short, is enough to facilitate imperfective aspect in Russian, provided the event has an atelic interpretation.[22] Mismatches of the type Spanish perfective ≈ Russian imperfective are obtained in particular with bounded durations, because Spanish must use perfective to the extent that an event is bounded by initial and final boundaries, while Russian can use imperfective when there is an internal duration.

In Janda & Fábregas (2019) we proposed that Russian views aspect from within the event, and is therefore sensitive to internal duration as a way to define imperfective to the exclusion of delimiting boundaries, while Spanish views aspect from without, and uses perfective when endpoints including a closing boundary are present. Figure (2) depicts an event (dashes) that is bounded at both ends (square brackets). The red ellipse depicts a Russian event-internal perspective that motivates imperfective, while the blue ellipse depicts a Spanish event-external perspective that includes the boundaries.

(2)
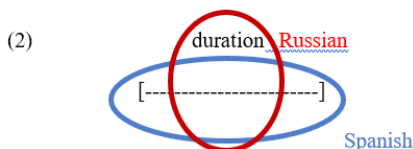
The present article extends this theory to the opposite mismatch, examples where Spanish imperfective ≈ Russian perfective. We show that the same proposal can also account for this less frequent, although still significant, mismatch. Additionally, we also address situations where a Spanish imperfective is equivalent to a perfective Russian conditional, which we derive from the same basic idea represented in (2). In essence, we argue that Spanish, because

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[21] The aspect of verbs is signaled as pfv = perfective and ipfv = imperfective. Additionally, sbj = subjunctive. We use abbreviations in square brackets to cite the sources of examples. S (for Spanish) = Ruiz Zafón 2001, R (for Russian) = Ruiz Zafón 2016. Letter abbreviations are followed by a page number, and for Spanish and Russian equivalents also by an ID number for each verb. Citations from the Russian National Corpus (ruscorpora.ru) appear with abbreviated metadata "passports". All data described herein is publicly available at https://doi.org/10.18710/WR4Y0Q

[22] Atelic durative events can of course appear as Russian perfectives in the presence of Aktionsart prefixes such as delimitative по- and perdurative про-, but these uses are relatively rare in comparison with the fairly common occurrence of Spanish perfective ≈ Russian imperfective.

it conceives aspect from without, does not count as perfective an event that is not bounded at its final point. By contrast, Russian, which adopts a within-event perspective, can use perfective when focus is put on the initial change that sets an event in motion.

This article is structured as follows. In the next section we provide general background on aspect in Russian and Spanish. Section 3 presents the data, while Section 4 analyzes the types of mismatches obtained, and how we account for them in our proposal. The last section presents our conclusions.

2. Russian and Spanish aspect

2.1 Russian aspect: perfective for initial boundaries

Traditional accounts of Russian aspect focus on the "boundedness" or "totality" of the perfective as opposed to the imperfective which lacks such features (cf. Jakobson 1957/1971, Maslov 1965, Forsyth 1970, Vinogradov 1972). A similar distinction is current also in Croft's (2012: 125) characterization of Russian perfective vs. imperfective as "boundedness/ unboundedness", as well as Tatevosov (2015). However featural analyses of this type fail to capture the complexity of the Russian aspectual distinction.

Janda (2004) elaborates this distinction in terms of a metaphorical model in which PERFECTIVE IS A DISCRETE SOLID OBJECT and IMPERFECTIVE IS A FLUID SUBSTANCE. This isomorphism between properties of matter and events accounts for the full range of uses for Russian aspect. For example, just as physical solid objects have clear inviolate edges that prevent them from occupying the same space, situations described by Russian perfective verbs have discrete temporal boundaries that usually prevent them from occupying the same place on a timeline (requiring sequencing). And just as fluid substances lack inherent boundaries, allowing them to spread or fill a container, situations described by Russian imperfective verbs do not specify any temporal boundaries, making them appropriate for both ongoing actions as well as gnomic statements (including categorical negation).

Crucial to the present analysis is the fact that an initial boundary is sufficient to motivate the use of the perfective in Russian, even when it leads to an unbounded state or activity as in examples like those in (3).

(3)   a. Теперь она хотела лишь одного: стать-**pfv** балериной. [А. Е. Рекемчук. Мамонты (2006)]
        'Now she wanted only one thing: **to become** a ballerina.'
    b. Перестал-**pfv** орать и заговорил-**pfv** нормальным голосом. [Мариам Петросян.
    Дом, в котором... (2009)]
    'He **stopped** shouting and **started to speak** in a normal voice.'

A closing boundary need not be present for a situation to be conveyed by a perfective verb form in Russian because the perspective adopted in this language is from within: it is not relevant whether the space is closed or open, but rather whether the event is durative – extended, like a fluid – or not, and by definition a boundary is in itself non-durative because

it expresses a single point in time. We represent this schematically as in (4). The initial boundary (depicted as [ ) reduces to an instantaneous change, the onset of the state or activity (depicted as dashes, with dots to depict the lack of a closing boundary). Russian does not identify any internal extension in that change and therefore treats it as a discrete object. This interpretation is consonant with Janda's (2004) metaphorical model described above and also with Dickey's (2000) description of the Russian perfective as "temporal definiteness", where any boundary is sufficient to establish a sequence of events.

(4) Russian perfective perspective on an initial boundary followed by an unbounded state or activity

[----------------------...

2.2 Spanish aspect: imperfective in the absence of anchoring

In Spanish, the metaphorical contrast SOLID OBJECT / FLUID SUBSTANCE is instantiated differently from Russian because the perspective adopted is from without, not event-internally but event-externally. Viewing an event from outside allows Spanish to focus on the fact that in (5) there is no end boundary to the event (depicted by the dots and the lack of a closing square bracket). This forces a conceptualization as a fluid substance because the event is not fully bounded at both extremes.

(5) Spanish imperfective perspective on an initial boundary followed by an unbounded state or activity

[------------------------...

There are a number of distinct theories about the nature of the imperfective past in Spanish, and two main proposals can be highlighted. One proposal treats the Spanish imperfective past as non-deictic in opposition to the Spanish perfective past, which is deictic (Rojo 1974, 1976; Hernández Alonso 1984, Rojo & Veiga 1999, Veiga 2015). According to this theory, events introduced in the Spanish perfective (6a) are themselves anchored to specific time periods and worlds, while the situations introduced by the imperfective (6b) do not introduce temporal anchoring by themselves but have to refer anaphorically to a past tense introduced by indefinites. This explains why situations in imperfective tend to be interpreted as simultaneous to each other (6c) or as setting general backgrounds where events in perfective are located (6d).

(6)　　a. Juan **cantó** ayer a las tres.
　　　　　Juan **sang-pfv** yesterday at three
　　　　b. Juan **cantaba**.
　　　　　Juan **sang-ipfv**

  c. Juan **cantaba** y **bebía**.
   Juan **sang-ipfv** and **drank-ipfv**
    'Juan **sang** while **drinking** / Juan **drank** while **singing** / Juan **sang** and **drank**
  at the same time'
  d. Mientras **cantaba**, Juan **bebió** un trago.
   while **sang-ipfv**, Juan **drank-pfv** a sip
  'While he **was singing**, Juan **took** a sip'

  The second main theory treats the difference between the perfective and the imperfective past as aspectual (Gili Gaya 1943: §120, Alarcos Llorach 1949, Bull 1960, García Fernández 2000, RAE & ASALE 2009: §23.10, Gras & Santiago 2012, Fábregas 2015, Palacio Alegre 2009, 2016; Ruiz Campillo 2000, 2005; Castañeda & Alonso 2009, and Castañeda & Alhmoud 2014): the imperfective implies a situation without a closing boundary, while the perfective implies situations where there is a termination or culmination point. In this theory, imperfective is used with states where there is no internal development, because that absence of development does not define a natural endpoint (7a) – unless another expression explicitly introduces that endpoint (7b); also with habitual sequences of events because they express unbounded sequences of actions (7c), as opposed to specific instances of the same event (7d), and individual events seen from the perspective of their internal development, excluding the natural termination (6d).

(7) a. Juan **estaba** enfermo.
   Juan **was-ipfv** sick
  b. Juan **estuvo** enfermo dos días.
   Juan **was-pfv** sick two days
  c. Juan **entrenaba** cada día.
   Juan **trained-ipfv** each day
  d. Juan **entrenó** aquel día.
   Juan **trained-pfv** that day
  e. Juan **entrenaba** cuando **tuvo** el accidente.
   Juan **trained-ipfv** when **had-pfv** the accident
  'Juan was training when he had the accident'

  Interestingly, the metaphorical conception of perfective as solid objects vs. imperfective as fluid substances is able to subsume the core of both theories. If the imperfective is not a solid object, it cannot be ordered with respect to other events, lacking the relevant boundary –which in Spanish is the end boundary given the external perspective–, and will not be able to identify specific time periods, also because it lacks defined boundaries. As a fluid substance it will be the form used in statives, unless they become bounded by an expression, and in habitual statements that are not anchored to specific and concrete time periods, and it will also be the form to use when the relevant part of the eventuality is the phase that excludes its endpoint, again because then its final boundary is removed.

2.3. The intersection of modality with aspect in Spanish and Russian

One component of this proposal is that imperfective, corresponding to a fluid substance, is not anchored to a specific situation: it cannot be directly associated to a specific bounded location. If the location is interpreted as a time period, this explains the association with habits, states and ongoing events, but Spanish takes this absence of anchoring a bit further and extends it to possible worlds: imperfective pasts are also used to express hypotheticals (Lavandera 1984, Silva-Corvalán 1984, Rojo 1986, Veiga 1991, Serrano 1994, Montolío 1999), as in the following conditional sentences.

(8)   a. Si **tuviera** dinero, te lo **daba**.
          if **had-sbj** money, you it **gave-ipfv**
       'If I **had** money, I **would give** it to you'
      b. Si **tuviera** tiempo, lo **hacía**.
          if **had-sbj** time, it **did-ipfv**
       'If I **had** time, I **would do** it'

In such examples, the imperfective is used to express absence of specific location within a modal dimension, across possible worlds. The tense form is used to express the notion that the situation reported is not anchored in the actual defined world, but in some hypothetical scenario that depends on the truth of the conditional sentence, which is not real in the actual world. Tellingly, Spanish allows imperfective past in a conditional sentence (8a-b) or outside it (as in 9), but never perfective past.

(9)   Si {**venía /*vino**}, nos {íbamos / *fuimos}.
      if   **came-ipfv / -pfv** us **left-ipfv / -pfv**
      'If he **came**, we **would leave**'

Similarly, other modal uses of the imperfective are attested, among others in the citative imperfective (10a), used to manifest epistemic insecurity about a piece of information provided previously to the speaker, or the so-called ludic imperfective (10b) used in children's games to represent fictive situations that are known to be untrue of the actual world.

(10) a. ¿Tú te **llamabas** Raquel?
           you you **called-ipfv** Raquel?
        'Your name is Raquel, is it not?'
      b. Jugamos a que yo **era** un gato.
           lets.play at that I **was-ipfv** a cat
        'Let's pretend that I **am** a cat'

There are two telling morphological facts that support the idea that the fluid substance metaphor is taken in Spanish to express absence of anchoring across a modal dimension. First, in the subjunctive, which is the mood used to express epistemic uncertainty, wishes, hypothetical situations and orders, there is an imperfective form, but no perfective expression.

Secondly, unlike in Russian, the conditional form uses the same endings as the imperfective past of the verbs belonging to the second and third conjugation, but none of the endings of the perfective past (11).

(11)		Conditional *beber* 'drink'	Imperfective *beber* 'drink'
1sg	beber-ía		beb-ía
2sg	beber-ías		beb-ías
3sg	beber-ía		beb-ía
1pl	beber-íamos		beb-íamos
2pl	beber-íais		beb-íais
3pl	beber-ían		beb-ían

To summarize, for Spanish the interpretation of the imperfective as a fluid substance is defined by the absence of an end boundary; given that an external perspective is adopted, the absence of an end boundary is enough to treat the event as unbounded. Absence of an end boundary implies absence of anchoring, generally within a temporal dimension, but can also be extended to a modal dimension.

A crucial difference between Spanish and Russian aspect is the fact that aspect is a part of the verbal paradigm in Spanish, whereas it is a characteristic of the whole verb in Russian. For Spanish, this means that aspect has the same status in the paradigm as any other mood or tense: a verb form can either express aspect (giving two options in the past tense), or it can express another tense (present, future) or mood (imperative, conditional, subjunctive), but, aside from expressing past tense combined with aspect, it is not possible to express both. If a form is conditional, for example, the expression of aspect is excluded.

In Russian, by contrast, all forms of a verb express aspect, which means that verb forms can express all options for both tense and mood in combination with aspect. The conditional, for example, is expressed in Russian by means of the particle бы and the conjunction чтобы, which combine with both perfective and imperfective past verb forms. A search (conducted 22.02.2019) in the main corpus of the Russian National Corpus of 283,431,966 words found 119,681 examples of a perfective past indicative verb form followed by бы, and 179,398 examples of an imperfective past indicative verb form followed by бы. Given that the overall number of past indicative verb forms in the corpus is 11,135,625 for perfectives, and 9,560,906 for imperfectives, it seems that there is some preference for imperfective over perfective forms. However, a calculation of the odds ratio shows that this preference is slight. An odds ratio value of 1 means that there is no relationship, and the value in this case indicates only a 1.76 odds in favor of imperfective. In other words, for Russian both aspects are nearly equally likely to appear with the conditional бы.

3. Parallel Corpus Data

Spanish perfectives are realized as Russian imperfectives in translation equivalents at a rate of about 17%, as shown in AUTHORS in press. The opposite correspondence, where we find Spanish imperfectives corresponding to Russian perfectives is calculated to be

approximately 8%, based on the data described below and summarized in Table 1.

	La Sombra del Viento sample (Sombra)	Russian National Corpus Spanish parallel corpus sample (RNC)
Total Spanish past imperfective	100% (967)	100% (528)
≈ Russian imperfective past	59.4% (574)	53.8% (284)
≈ other Russian imperfective	12.4% (120)	11.4% (60)
≈ Russian perfective past	5.8% (56)	5.1% (27)
≈ other Russian perfective	2.4% (23)	2.7% (14)
≈ no verb in Russian	20.1% (194)	27.1% (143)

Table 1. Distribution of Russian equivalents to Spanish past imperfective forms in two samples. Green shading indicates aspectual matches, orange shading indicates aspectual mismatches. Spanish imperfective ≈ Russian perfective in 5.8% + 2.4% = 8.2% of examples in *Sombra* sample; 5.1% + 2.7% = 7.8% of examples in RNC sample.

This study is based on two datasets containing Spanish past imperfective forms and their Russian translation equivalents. The first dataset is called *Sombra*, reflecting the title of Ruiz Zafón's (2001) novel. The *Sombra* dataset is a hand-coded spreadsheet of parallel sentences from the Spanish novel and its Russian translation. This spreadsheet contains over 5,000 pairs of sentences from the novel. There are 967 lines in which the original Spanish verb is a past imperfective form (as shown at the top of the Sombra column), and in 694 (71.8%) of cases, the Russian translation equivalent was also an imperfective verb form (here we add together the data in the two rows shaded in green, where the aspect matches). In 194 lines (20.1%) the Russian translation does not contain any corresponding verb (this is shown at the bottom of the *Sombra* column). In the remaining 79 lines (8.2%; see the two rows shaded in orange, where the aspect does not match), the original Spanish past imperfective is translated either with a Russian perfective past form (56 examples; 5.8%) or another Russian perfective form (23 examples; 2.4%). The second dataset is called *RNC*, since it is extracted from the Spanish Parallel Corpus contained in the Russian National Corpus (ruscorpora.ru). A search of this corpus produced 528 examples of Spanish past imperfective verb forms with their Russian translation equivalents, yielding a distribution very similar to the *Sombra* dataset. In the majority of cases (344 pairs of examples, or 65.2%; see green rows) the Russian equivalent is also an imperfective form, and 143 (27.1%) examples had no Russian verb corresponding to the Spanish imperfective. But the translation equivalents for 41 (7.8%) Spanish imperfectives are Russian perfectives: 27 (5.1%) are Russian perfective past forms, and 14 (2.7%) are other perfective forms (see orange rows).

This study explores the examples from the *Sombra* and the *RNC* datasets in which a Spanish imperfective parallels a Russian perfective (shaded orange in Table 1). In all there are 120 such examples, 83 involving a Russian past tense form and 37 involving some other verb form in Russian. The distribution of these examples is displayed in Table 2.

	Included Data		Excluded Data	
Past perfective	Past in equivalent wording	77	Past in non-equivalent wording	6
Other perfective forms	Imperative	1	Infinitive	6
	Future (non-past)	6	Past passive participle	12
	Past active participle	7		
	Past gerund	2		
Totals		**93**		**27**

Table 2. Distribution of (93 + 27 =) 120 examples in which Spanish imperfective ≈ Russian perfective.

Of the 83 parallel examples with a Russian past tense form, 6 are cases where the Russian wording is significantly different from the Spanish, so we exclude those from our analysis. The 37 examples with other Russian verb forms are a diverse group comprised of: 1 imperative, 6 futures (non-past forms), 7 past active participles, 2 past gerunds, 6 infinitives, and 15 past passive participles. We exclude the infinitives because in all of these examples the Russian wording is substantially different from the Spanish, and we also exclude the past passive participles because they are either combined with or presuppose the presence of the imperfective verb быть 'be'. Our analysis draws on the remaining 93 examples where a Russian perfective clearly parallels a Spanish imperfective, 77 of these involving a Russian past tense form, 16 with another perfective form in Russian (imperative, future, past active participle, or past gerund).

4. Analysis

In this section we present and analyze the mismatches identified in Section 3. The first subsection is entirely devoted to the Spanish imperfective ≈ Russian perfective cases, where we show how the perspective adopted in each language determines the choices. The second subsection deals with modal uses of the Spanish imperfective.

4.1. Condition 1: a single boundary is enough in Russian, but not in Spanish

Spanish, in our proposal, adopts a default perspective from outside the event to evaluate the imperfective / perfective contrast. Crucially, then, from the perspective of the speaker, an eventuality that has no closing boundary is imperfective, and the initial boundary is irrelevant. By contrast, since Russian views aspect from within, the speaker has access to both boundaries: the initial boundary of a change also counts to bound the eventuality, and then perfective aspect can be used. This basic difference explains three types of Spanish imperfective ≈ Russian perfective mismatches.

4.1.1. There is an initial onset, but no end boundary

The clearest instances of mismatch motivated by a Spanish event-external vs. a Russian event-internal perspective are those where it is explicitly stated that an event starts but there is no mention of its culmination or termination. Some examples of this type involve Russian verbs with an Aktionsart prefix that signals the starting point of the event, such as рас- (12), за- (13) and вос- (14).

(12)

El mendigo **se reía-ipfv** de puro placer al sentir el tejido limpio sobre la piel. [S109:1]

Нищий рассмеялся-**pfv** от удовольствия, почувствовав прикосновение к телу мягкой чистой ткани. [R91:24]

'The beggar **started laughing** from pleasure when he felt the clean fabric on his skin'

(13)

Siempre abierto a las novedades, Monsieur Roquefort adquirió el libro más que nada porque el título le **resultaba-ipfv** sugerente [S40:13]

Открытый всему новому, мсье Рокфор купил ее лишь потому, что его заинтересовало-**pfv** название [R24:23]

'Always open to new experiences, Monsieur Roquefort bought the book mainly because the title **appealed** to him'

(14)

su hija, una señorita de la buena sociedad parisina, muy leída y fina ella, **se enamoraba-ipfv** del ladrón [S41:9]

Дочь магната, изысканная, образованная девушка, входя в высший свет, воспылала-**pfv** к вору любовной страстью [R25:22]

'His daughter, a lady from Parisian high society, very well-read and refined, **fell in love** with the thief'

These three examples have the same basic semantic structure: the onset of a state or event that is prolonged indefinitely: laughing, being appealing, and starting to love someone. The onset of the event or state, marked by the prefix, is enough in Russian to license perfective, but not in Spanish. For instance, (12) describes the trigger for the beggar's laughter, but this sentence does not make any statement about how long he laughed. However, as soon as the onset of the state is known, Russian licenses perfective.

The following examples are similar, though more subtle.

(15)

a. se le había caído el pelo y los dientes al tiempo que la cara y las manos **se le recubrían-ipfv** de hongos recriminatorios [S64:53]

выпали волосы и зубы, а лицо и руки покрылись-**pfv** позорным грибком [R49:55]

'his hair and teeth had fallen out and at the same time his face and hands **got covered** by an embarrassing fungus'

b. Clara juraba y perjuraba que era cierto, y yo **me rendía-ipfv** [S61:58]

Но она настаивала, что говорит правду, пока я наконец не сдался-**pfv** [R46:43]

'Clara swore once and again that it was true, and I **started giving up** / until I **gave up**'

Both are instances of past events whose end boundary is blurred because what is relevant is the fact that the change started. In the first example, the event of getting covered with fungus is ongoing, and starts at the same time that the action of losing the hair and teeth; the

idea is that the process started, but there is no reference to its culmination. Similarly, in the second example the Spanish imperfective is used to convey the idea that the subject is being pressured to the point of giving up. This initial boundary is enough in Russian to motivate the use of the perfective in both cases because, adopting an internal perspective of the event, an initial boundary is as relevant as an end boundary. This is, however, not enough to license perfective in Spanish due to the absence of an endpoint: from an external perspective, the endpoint is the relevant boundary to determine whether the event is a fluid or a discrete object.

There are other ways to convey that a state has a defined starting point. In (16), Spanish has the phase adverb *ya* 'already', which presupposes that a state has started in the recent past, but does not make entailments about whether this state ends at some point. As expected from our proposal, Russian can use perfective because the state (the outcome of the decision) is explicitly claimed to have started.

(16)
—Ya **pensaba-ipfv** que te habías perdido por ahí —dijo—. [S53:37]
— Я уже решил-**pfv**, что ты потерялся. [R38:23]
'I **was** already **thinking** that you had got lost somewhere –he said'

However, even in the absence of specific markers that a state has started with respect to a previous situation, any situation that involves the starting point of a state will be an example of the imperfective ≈ perfective mismatch. Particularly frequent are instances involving verbs expressing mental states, as it is the case in (17) of *imaginar* 'imagine', in (18) with *creer* 'believe' and in (19) with *empeñarse* 'insist'.

(17)
Al hacerlo, **imaginaba-ipfv** a la hija de Isaac recorriendo aquellos mismos corredores oscuros e interminables con idéntica determinación a la que me guiaba a mí: salvar el libro. [S98:13]
Оказавшись там, я представил-**pfv** себе дочь Исаака, проходившую по тем же темным, бесконечным коридорам, с той же целью, что вела меня: спасти книгу. [R82:50]
'When doing so, I **imagined** Isaac's daughter going through the same dark and endless corridors with the same determination that guided me: to save the book'

(18)
pero en boca de mi padre sonaba a que aquello no **se lo creían-ipfv** ni las piedras [S52:6]
Однако из уст моего отца она звучала так, что ей не поверили-**pfv** бы даже камни [R36:38]
'But from my father's mouth it sounded as if not even stones **could believe** that'

(19)
Era ya cuestión de tozudez: si el mundo **se empeñaba-ipfv** en enterrar a Carax en el olvido, a él no le daba la gana de pasar por el aro. [S43:33]
Это уже был вопрос принципа: если весь мир сговорился-**pfv** предать имя Каракса

забвению, то лично он не сложит оружия. [R27:45]

'It had become a question of stubbornness: if the world **insisted** on consigning Carax to oblivion, he did not wish to accept it'

In these cases, the verbs convey the meaning that the subject starts entertaining some mental state. There are also other cases where the type of mental state involves the description of how the narrator or the subject perceives a particular object or event, as in (20), which states that the narrator gets the impression that a particular sound is exquisite.

(20)
El sonido del cierre al abrirse **era-ipfv** exquisito, de mecanismo de relojería. [S101:29]
Щелчок замка показался-**pfv** мне столь же изысканным, как бой лучших в мире часов. [R86:10]
'The sound of the lock when it opened **was** / **seemed** to me exquisite, like clockwork'

This type of situation is frequently instantiated with the verb *quedar* 'remain'.

(21) a. ¿Le **quedaba-ipfv** familia en la ciudad? [S93:58]
      У него остались-**pfv** родственники? [R78:15]
      '**Did** he **have** family left in the city?'
      b. Cuando sólo **quedaba-ipfv** el último bidón
        Когда остался-**pfv** последний бак
          'When only the last can remained...' [А. Н. Стругацкий, Б. Н. Стругацкий. Град обреченный (1972)]

Interestingly, the situation we are seeing implies that from a Russian perspective the notion of 'starting point' becomes more relevant than the notion of 'state' that is so central in the use of the Spanish perfective, because states are by default not bounded by a culmination. This explains the case of (22).

(22)
Estaba-ipfv el mendigo por relatarme los pormenores y tecnicismos de un plan secreto para secuestrar a doña Carmen Polo de Franco [S85:33]
Бродяга уже начал-**pfv** посвящать меня в подробности тайного плана похищения доньи Кармен Поло де Франко [R69:10]
'The beggar **was about** / **had already begun** to tell me the details and technicalities of a secret plan to kidnap Ms. Carmen Polo de Franco...'

The Spanish original uses imperfective because the periphrasis *estar por* + infinitive refers to the preparatory state that precedes an action, and is therefore stative. However, that preparatory state strongly implies that the event of telling those details was at its starting point. Spanish would never be able to use perfective in such a context, with an unbounded preparatory state, but the preparatory nature of that state is enough to define a starting point that licenses the perfective in Russian.

4.1.2. Stylistic uses with verba dicendi

A portion of the mismatches identified in our study involve verbs of saying such as *decir* 'say' or *pronunciar* 'pronounce', which appear in imperfective in the Spanish as stylistic devices to let the reader see the actions developing in front of them, as if they were spectators of the narrated events.

(23)

Decía-ipfv que alguien la había estado siguiendo y que temía que el tal Coubert quisiera hacerse con los libros para destruirlos. [S95:36]

Сказала-**pfv**, что кто-то преследует ее и она боится, что Кубер может добраться до этих книг, чтобы их уничтожить. [R79:58]

'She **said** that someone had been following her, and that she was afraid that that Coubert wanted to get hold of the books in order to destroy them'

(24)

Clara **pronunciaba-ipfv** estas palabras con una dureza que parecía forjada en años de secreto y sombra. [S39:24]

Последние слова Клара произнесла-**pfv** с твердостью, проверенной годами потаенной боли и страданий. [R23:32]

'Clara **pronounced** those words with a force that was tempered by years of secrets and shadows / secret pain and suffering'

These passages reproduce stories told by other sources, and in both cases Spanish could use perfective without any change in logical entailments. Using perfective, however, would remove the stylistic device that makes the reader feel like a spectator looking on when the woman reported her concerns and Clara pronounced her forceful words. The stylistic use of the imperfective in these cases can also be explained by the same device that we used in the previous section: the imperfective blurs the endpoint of the event, and makes the reader feel like a spectator seeing events while they happen. Therefore, such events have a starting point but no endpoint; Russian identifies the starting point, and is therefore able to use perfective.

This use is common with verba dicendi, but by no means restricted to them. In (25) we have the verbs *desentrañar* 'solve' and *descubrir* 'discover', which in the Spanish imperfective lets the reader conceive them as gradual processes developing in front of his or her eyes. These verbs appear as perfectives in Russian.

(25)

la heroína **desentrañaba-ipfv** el misterio… **descubría-ipfv** un horrible secreto sobre su propio padre [S41:11,15]

героиня раскрыла-**pfv** тайну... но при этом она узнала-**pfv** еще и ужасные подробности из жизни собственного отца [R25:24,28]

'the heroine **solved** the mystery … she **discovered** a horrible secret about her father'

Note that even though a verb like 'discover' is generally conceptualized as punctual, the stylistic use of the Spanish imperfective gives the impression that the discovery is gradual,

with a non-relevant endpoint.

4.1.3. Spanish *be* vs. Russian *turn out to be*

As we have argued, Russian is sensitive to the initial boundaries of states or events while Spanish requires endpoints to license the use of perfective. This produces systematic differences in the description of properties associated with objects and events. In situations where there is an evaluation of these properties, we have seen that Russian can use perfective because that evaluation involves entertaining a mental state with a particular starting point.

The relevance of the starting point for Russian makes it possible for some examples involving stative *ser* 'be' in Spanish to be faithfully translated with Russian verbs meaning 'become, turn out to be' in contexts involving evaluations, as in the following examples.

(28)

La raíz de mi ensoñación literaria, además de esa maravillosa simplicidad con que todo se ve a los cinco años, **era-ipfv** una prodigiosa pieza de artesanía y precisión que estaba expuesta en una tienda de plumas estilográficas en la calle de Anselmo Clavé, justo detrás del Gobierno Militar. [S49:11]

Побудительным мотивом к выбору литературной карьеры, если не считать волшебной легкости, с которой человек взирает на жизнь с высоты своих пяти лет, **стало-pfv** чудо мастерства и филигранности, выставленное в витрине магазина письменных принадлежностей на улице Ансельмо Клаве, что за зданием канцелярии военного коменданта. [R33:27]

'The wellspring of my literary dream, beyond that blissful simplicity with which one sees things at the age of five, **was** a wonderful work of craftsmanship and precision that was displayed in a pen shop in Anselmo Clavé street, right behind the military government office'

(29)

De niño sentí la llamada del verso y quise ser Sófocles o Virgilio, porque a mí la tragedia y las lenguas muertas me ponen la piel de gallina, pero mi padre, que en gloria esté, **era-ipfv** un cazurro de poca visión y siempre quiso que uno de sus hijos ingresara en la Guardia Civil [S108:31]

В детстве я был одержим поэзией, желал славы Софокла и Виргилия, от высокой трагедии и древних языков у меня до сих пор мурашки бегут по телу, но мой отец, да упокоится он с миром, **оказался-pfv** грубым невеждой, желавшим, чтобы хотя бы кто-то из его детей поступил на службу в жандармерию. [R90:48]

'As a child I felt the call of poetic inspiration and I wanted to be Sophocles or Virgil, because I get goosebumps from tragedy and dead languages; however, my father, God bless his soul, **was** a short-sighted fool that always wanted one of his sons to join the military police'

(30)

No obstante, Occidente no tiene motivos para desesperar, ya que el presidente ucraniano, Víctor Yanukóvich, no **era-ipfv** tan prorruso como se pensaba.

И все же у Запада нет оснований отчаиваться, поскольку украинский

президент Виктор Янукович оказался-**pfv** не столь пророссийски настроенным, как предполагалось.

'However, the West has no reason to despair, because the Ukrainian president, Viktor Yanukovich, **was** not as pro-Russian as we might have thought' [Óscar Gantes. Ucrania, el dilema de Occidente [www.onemagazine.es] (2011.11.19)]

(31)
El funcionario: «Lo tiene usted que decir…». Así de burdo **era-ipfv** el juego.

Представитель Пентагона: 'Вы должны сказать, что есть…'. Вот настолько примитивной оказалась-**pfv** эта игра.

'The [Pentagon's] representative: "You have to say..." That's how crude the game **was**' [Dario Valcarcel. Bush no responde [sevilla.abc.es] (2004.03.04)]

In these four cases we have an evaluative description of a subject and a stative description assigned to this subject. The Russian translations can use verbs meaning 'become, turn out to be' in such cases because even though there is no result state or culmination of any change, there is a relevant starting point for that set of properties to be assigned to the subject. Perfectivity follows from here as well. In contrast, Spanish can only use the stative copula *ser* 'be' because the presence of the initial boundary is not enough to stop conceptualizing the description as a stative predicate.

Russian perfective past active participles can likewise convey the beginning of a state that is expressed using an imperfective verb in Spanish, as in this example.

(32)
Por espacio de casi media hora deambulé entre los entresijos de aquel laberinto que **olía-ipfv** a papel viejo, a polvo y a magia. [S21:15]

Около получаса я бродил по закоулкам лабиринта, пропахшего-**pfv** старой бумагой, пылью и волшебством. [R7:40]

'For about a half an hour I wandered the passageways of that labyrinth which **smelled** of old paper, dust, and magic'

From the Spanish perspective, the labyrinth was in a state of smelling a certain way, whereas from the Russian perspective, it acquired that smell at some point, motivating the use of perfective aspect.

4.2. Condition 2: hypothetical values

A second context in which Russian can use the perfective but Spanish cannot involves hypothetical values. Russian expresses the perfectivity or imperfectivity of a verb independent of its modal value, while Spanish can express either aspect or modality, but not both at the same time (the contrast between perfective and imperfective is not expressed in conditionals and subjunctives). Unsurprisingly, in cases where the Spanish imperfective is used in modal contexts, Russian resorts to other, specifically modal, verb forms.

4.2.1. Russian conditionals

Some cases involve equivalences with the Russian conditional. These contexts describe a past situation, the truth or falsity of which depends on circumstances that are not taken as guaranteed. Example (18) above, repeated here as (33) for convenience, is one such example. The Russian perfective verb form is followed by the conditional particle бы, which expresses the hypothetical nature of the statement. The Spanish original states that it sounded as if not even stones could believe what the father said; it is not stated that nobody would believe it, or that anyone would, but that in the absence of a more trustworthy source one cannot be certain that anyone would believe it. Importantly, Spanish could substitute imperfective *creían* with conditional *creerían* in this example.

(33)
pero en boca de mi padre sonaba a que aquello no **se lo creían-ipfv** ni las piedras [S52:6]
Однако из уст моего отца она звучала так, что ей не поверили-**pfv** бы даже камни [R36:38]
'But from my father's mouth it sounded as if not even stones **could believe** that'

The following example also has a modal flavor, given that the Spanish original explicitly states that one cannot be certain that inspector Fumero and the other character had a long history of conflict: the narrator does not have first-hand evidence of this, as marked by *al parecer* 'seemingly' in Spanish and by судя по всему 'judging from everything' in Russian.

(34)
un tal inspector Fumero con el que al parecer **llevaba-ipfv** un largo historial de conflictos [S106:32]
в лице инспектора Фумеро, история его столкновений с которым, судя по всему, составила-**pfv** бы не один том [R88:32]
'...a certain inspector Fumero, who seemingly **had** a long history of conflict with him'

The perfective in Russian is explained in the same way as before: the stative situation has started, although the endpoint is not specified.

In the following example, the mismatch imperfective ≈ conditional appears in a sentence that describes a hypothetical state of events, namely what the kings wanted to avoid: whether in fact some land was lost or not depends on whether the measures they took were effective or not. Here, Spanish could have used subjunctive past *cayera* without any relevant change in meaning.

(35)
Una extensa región imposible de defender por tropas «nacionales» y que llevó a los monarcas de este Imperio a usar un buen número de unidades mercenarias para lanzar ataques sobre sus enemigos (principalmente Grecia) y garantizar que ni un ápice de tierra **caía-ipfv** en manos ajenas.
Речь шла об огромном пространстве, которое невозможно было защитить при помощи только национальных войск. Это обстоятельство вынудило правителей

империи пойти на привлечение значительного числа наемнических войск для ведения боевых действий с неприятелями (в основном с Грецией) с тем, чтобы ни одна пядь земли не перешла-**pfv** в чужие руки.

'An extensive region that could not be defended by national troops, something that led the governors of that kingdom to use a considerable number of mercenary units to attack their enemies (particularly Greece) and guarantee that not even the smallest stretch of land **would fall** into other people's hands' [Manuel P. Villatoro. La verdad sobre los «Inmortales», los guerreros de élite persas humillados por solo 300 espartanos [www.abc.es] (2016.03.29)]

In this example the Russian perfective is explained because the event of 'falling into the hands of others' involves a result and is an instantaneous event. In Spanish the imperfective marks absence of anchoring in a modal dimension, but Russian can express the modal value independent of the aspectual value, facilitating the choice of perfective.

4.2.2. Russian futures

Russian can use the future in hypothetical contexts where the degree of certainty that the situation described could happen is slightly higher than in conditional examples. A relevant difference between these examples and the previous ones is that the situation described is still not effective in the actual world, but is felt as quite likely. In these cases, Spanish would be able to use past subjunctive: respectively *sugiriera* (36), *entrara* (37), *revivieran* (38) and *interrumpiera* (39).

(36)
Creía que si era yo quien lo **sugería-ipfv**, facilitaría las cosas. [S67:18]
Мне казалось, что, если такой разговор заведу-**pfv** именно я, отцу будет проще говорить на эту тему. [R52:27]
'I thought that if it was me who **would suggest** it, things would go smoother / it would be easier for my father to talk about it'

(37)
Con la voz entrecortada nos explicó que el señor Romero de Torres se había encerrado en su cuarto por dentro, estaba gritando como un loco, golpeando las paredes y jurando que si alguien **entraba-ipfv**, se mataría allí mismo cortándose el cuello con una botella rota. [S111:22]
Прерывающимся голосом она сообщила, что сеньор Ромеро де Торрес заперся в своей комнате, кричит, как помешанный, бьется о стены и грозит, что, если кто-нибудь к нему войдет-**pfv**, он перережет себе горло бутылочным стеклом. [R93:44]
'With her voice choked with emotion, she explained to us that Mr. Romero de Torres had locked himself in his room, was shouting like a madman, hitting the walls and swearing that if someone **came in** he would kill himself there by slashing his throat with a broken bottle'

(38)
En los últimos años han sido hallados los restos de algunos presuntos chupasangres cuyos cuellos fueron fijados con una hoz metálica a sus ataúdes para evitar que pudieran

escapar si **revivían-ipfv**.

В последние годы были обнаружены останки ряда предполагаемых вампиров, чьи скелеты были прикреплены металлическими скобами к гробам, чтобы они не могли выбраться из них, если оживут-**pfv**.

'In the last years the remains of some alleged vampires were found; their necks had been secured to their coffins with a metal rod to prevent them from escaping if they **came back to life**' [Desentierran a tres «vampiros» mutilados y torturados brutalmente durante la Edad Media [www.abc.es] (2016.12.19)]

Note that in these cases the situation described by the Spanish imperfective was considered likely by the subjects: in (36) the interlocutor believes that the other person can suggest it, Romero thinks that it would not be strange if someone entered the room in (37), and the people that took those precautions with the dead bodies believed that they could easily come back to life (38).

Finally, we have one case in which Russian uses the imperative, consistent with Fortuin's (2000) finding that Russian imperatives can be used as conditionals. Here there is some likelihood that the narrator might interrupt the interlocutor.

(39)
Tenía la voz de cristal, transparente y tan frágil que me pareció que sus palabras se quebrarían si la **interrumpía-ipfv** a media frase. [S36:3]

Ее слова были как хрупкое прозрачное стекло; казалось, оборви-**pfv** я ее на полуфразе, они бы разбились. [R20:27]

'She had a crystal voice, transparent and so fragile that I thought that her words would break if I **interrupted** her in the middle of a sentence'

5. Conclusions

We argue that the same type of contrast that explains some Spanish perfective ≈ Russian imperfective mismatches is also responsible for Spanish imperfective ≈ Russian perfective mismatches. The event-internal perspective adopted by Russian makes it both sensitive to the duration of an event and to the presence of an initial boundary, which is enough for Russian to determine that an eventuality is not unbounded. The event-external perspective in Spanish makes it both insensitive to the duration of an event and to the initial boundary, because for Spanish the only relevant question is whether the endpoint is specified or not, making the distinction between event and state more relevant in Spanish than in Russian for the choice of aspectual value.

These differences conspire with independent facts about the two languages to create aspectual mismatches: Russian expresses aspect lexically through prefixes and other devices, and this allows Russian verbs to establish aspectual contrasts even in contexts that are modal, while Spanish neutralizes aspectual distinctions in modal contexts, and assigns modal values to the imperfective.

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