Grammatical Forms with Future Semantics in Russian and German

I. INTRODUCTION

Comparative studies make a substantial contribution to the general and applied linguistics development. They make it possible to understand how our language operates, how languages differ from each other and what they have in common. In its turn, this helps preserve multiculturalism and facilitate dialogue between languages and cultures.

In this article we aim to compare and analyze indicative grammatical forms used to express future action in the Russian and German direct speech. The languages under comparison belong to the same language family – Indo-European. In this regard, they demonstrate certain similarities in language categories structure and their functioning. At the same time, there are fundamental differences in the languages organization due to their peculiar development. Similarities and differences can also be found in means of expression of future actions in the Russian and German languages, which are revealed and described in this article.

There has been no previous comparative research of grammatical forms with future semantics in German and Russian. Meanwhile, the future is a meaningful phenomenon in terms of ontology, gnoseology and axiology. Due to this, most languages have multiple means of expression of future semantics, which vary depending on the type of speech, discourse and intentions of the speaker. The main means of expression of future semantics in the languages under comparison are indicative grammatical verb forms typical for direct speech. Hence, we believe that it would be right to choose them for our empirical research.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

In the Russian direct speech, the future meaning can be expressed by several grammatical forms. However, these are not purely tense forms but aspect-tense forms since aspect opposition plays a key role in the Russian language system of tenses. The main forms to express future meaning are the imperfective aspect Future form (e.g., буду открывать) and the perfective aspect Future form (открою). The future meaning is considered the primary meaning for these forms [e.g., 5, p. 50]. The forms demonstrate a range of differences both structural and semantic. The form буду открывать is analytical while открою is synthetic.

It is repeatedly mentioned that the imperfective aspect Future analytical form denotes an action that will happen in the future, without any reference to the present [38, p. 463; 29, p. 243]. The perfective aspect future forms "perform a peculiar synthesis of the Present and Future meanings" [29, p. 230]. In particular, A. Bondarko writes about two principal meanings of the perfective aspect Future tense form: 1) future meaning related to the present and 2) future meaning not related to the present. The first meaning is limited by a situation or context which signal that the action begins in the present, as well as lexically: such meaning can be expressed by verbs with a final action moment as part of their semantics, e.g.: Он сейчас приедет - «Он сейчас приедет» [5, p. 57–58].

At the same time, the imperfective aspect Future tense form can also express an action "which has already started and will continue in the future": (A question to the person reading : – Ты что будешь делать? – Буду читать. - «Ты что будешь делать?» – Буду читать) [10, p. 153–154]. However, the relation between the future and the present is more obvious in the perfective aspect Future tense forms.

The names of the two forms show that they differ in aspect. It is noted, for example, that the perfective aspect Future tense form usually "denotes a future action as

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finished”, while the imperfective aspect Future tense form "denotes a continuous action in the future” [1, p. 239].

Completion of an action expressed by the perfected aspect Future tense form is usually not challenged, whereas in the case of the imperfective aspect Future tense form some scholars have a different point of view. In particular, E. Paduccheva writes about two principal meanings of the imperfective aspect Future tense form: 1) actual-continuous (progressive): «Завтра в это время я уже буду сидеть в вагоне поезда Москва-Варшава» – (Zavtra v eto vremya ya izhe budu sidet’ v vagone poezda Moskva-Berlin); 2) prospective (inceptive meaning): храм все-таки будут восстанавливать, – «Hram vse-taki budut vosstanavlivat’» According to E. Paduccheva, it is the inceptive meaning that is the most widely spread nowadays [27, p. 17].

Yu. Knyazev mentions four meanings of the imperfective aspect Future tense form: 1) inception (Oni обмениваются, получив хорошую отдельную квартиру, будут жить вместе – «Oni obmenyavayutsya, poluchat' horoshuyu odel'/nuju kvartiru, budut’hit’ mesto» (Trifonov)); 2) intention (Если будешь посылать продукты, обязательно положи хотя бы бутылочку растительного масла – «Eсли budesh’ posylat’ produkty, obyazat’no polozhi hotya by butylchku raschit'nogo masla» (Volos)); 3) limited control, namely, absence of confidence that the action will be carried out (с. Завтра буду сдавать экзамен – «Завтра buda sdavat’ ekzamen» vs Завтра сдам экзамен – «Zavtra sdam ekzamen» - the expression with the perfective aspect Future tense form has more confidence); 4) iterativeness (Tam sad kakoi! Большущий. Я к тебе за черешнями теперь буду приходить – «Tam sad kako! Bol'shushchii. Ya k tebe za chereishnymi teper’ budu prihodit’» (Belyaev) [16, p. 56–63].

Thus, we can say that, in terms of aspect opposition, the difference between the forms under comparison is that the imperfective aspect Future tense forms often emphasize the initial stage of actions, whereas the perfective aspect Future tense forms emphasize the final stage [16, p. 56].

Alongside the perfective and imperfective aspect Future tense forms, the imperfective Present and perfective Past tense forms can be used to denote a future action. This is the so-called figurative use of aspect-tense forms [30, p. 632; 5, p. 154; 8, p. 75].

"The Present tense form in this case denotes that the action is ready to happen or that there is a potential for the action in the nearest future. These nuances of the Present tense form meaning arise from the subjective perception of the future as something already taking place, coming true in the mind of a person” [38, p. 465].

A. Bondarko distinguishes two primary meanings of the imperfective aspect Present tense form when used to denote a future action: 1) Present of a planned action; 2) Present of an imaginary action [5, p. 154]. In the planned action Present the imperfective form denotes a planned, scheduled action within the control of a person: «Мы нынче обедаем у Развумовского – сказал он» - «My nynche obedayem u Razumovskogo – skazal on» (Nikulin) [ibid]. A specific variety of the panned action Present are cases when alongside the meaning of a planned action there is also the modal meaning of persuasion, order. For example: «Нынче на рассвете ты едешь в Варшаву» – «Nynche na rassvete ty edesh’ v Varshavu» [ibid]. The imaginary action Present is a specific variety of the Present tense form meaning. While in the planned action Present the speaker does not leave the starting point of temporal orientation and plans in the present what should happen in the future, in the imaginary action Present the speaker completely turns their mind to the future and paints a picture of a future that becomes real in their imagination [5, p. 157–158]. The second meaning of the imperfective aspect Present tense form should be considered marginal due to its specific nature, whereas the first meaning of a planned, scheduled action is more frequent, despite the fact that not every verb can be used in this meaning. It is used in colloquial speech, as well as in business communication and mass media texts [10, p. 167].

As already mentioned, the perfective aspect Past tense form can be mentioned to denote a future action in Russian. The use of this form in the future context is strictly limited. The future action in this case is represented as if it has already happened. M. Glovinskaya distinguishes the following meanings of the perfective aspect Past tense forms in the future context: 1) the speaker talks about their intention to perform the action: Ну, я пошёл. - «Nu, ya poshyol». Few verbs can be used in this meaning: пошёл «poshyol», ушёл «ushyl», побежал «pobezhal», исчез «ischez», начал «nachal». 2) the speaker perceives the future action as an inevitable outcome of some event: Ну, сохрани Бог, украдут что-нибудь у нас – пропал я! – «Nu, sorhoun Bog, ukradut chto- nibud’ i nas – propal’ ya!» (Turgenev). Few event-related verbs can express this meaning: пропал «propal», погиб «pogib», выиграл «vyigral», выиграл «vyigral», погорел «pogorel» and some others. 3) the speaker denies the future action with contempt or irony: Как же! Поняла я за него замуж! (~Не пойду). – «Kak zhe! Poshla ya za nego zamuzh! (~Ne pojdu)». Expressions with the perfective aspect Past tense forms with future meaning are used as a kind of set phrases. They are very expressive. All three meanings can only be found in colloquial speech [10, p. 169–174].

Since the use of non-specialized Present and Past forms with future meaning is subject to limitations, these forms should be less frequent than the specialized Future tense forms.

To express future meaning in the German direct speech, the following tense forms are used: Futur I, Futur II, Präsens and Perfekt. Futur I and Futur II have traditionally been considered grammatical forms with future as their primary meaning [7, p. 510–511]. Both forms are analytical. Futur I is used to denote the future following the moment of speech, whereas Futur II denotes the future that has ended by a definite moment in the future or a future action preceding some other future action [ibid, p. 509].

Futur I: Ich werde zu dir heute kommen.
Futur II: Nachdem ich gekommen sein werde, werden wir Tee trinken.

However, today Futur II is increasingly used for assumptions about the past, and this meaning has become as frequent as the form's future meaning:

„Wann sind die Kohlen angekommen?“ – „Na, lange werden die Kohlen hier nicht gelegen haben. Über Nacht sicher nicht, da hätten sie Beine bekommen.“ – „Gut möglich.“ [12].

Präsen und Perfekt can also be used to denote the future in German, although this meaning is not primary for them. Nevertheless, the two forms successfully compete with the specialized Future tense forms. In particular, Präsen is used alongside Futur I, and Perfekt is often used instead of Futur II [13, p. 95–98]:

Präsen: Ich komme zu dir heute.

Perfekt: Nachdem ich gekommen bin, werden wir Tee trinken.

In synonymic pairs Futur I/Präsen and Futur II/Perfekt, Präsen and Perfekt are more frequent in direct speech [2]. It is possible to come across the following comments about rival Futur I and future-related Präsen in books on linguistics:

1) Future-related Präsen is often used to denote the speaker's confidence that the action will happen, and Futur I – to denote probability [37, p. 115; 31, p. 45; 14, p. 234; 23, p. 127]:

Präsen: „Reg dich nicht auf, Sigurd“, sagte ein kleiner untergesetzter Mann, „ich gehe und hole sie“. Er nickte den anderen zu, wandte sich um, öffnete die schwere Rathaustür und ging hinein [12].


2) Future-related Präsen is more often used to denote the nearest future, Futur I – the distant future [39, p. 231–232; 11, p. 115; 24, p. 105 et al.]:

Präsen: „Bitte warten Sie. Ich bin gleich wieder zurück“ [15].

Futur I: „Opas Haus werde ich irgendwann verkaufen und den Erlös mit meiner Schwester teilen“ [26].

3) Präsen denotes planned and, thus, controlled actions, while Futur I denotes actions or events beyond the speaker's control [18, p. 100–102; 23, p. 127; 24, p. 163].


Futur I: „Wenn du willst, kann ich mit meinen Eltern sprechen. Sie werden dir sicher erlauben, bei uns ab und zu mal zu baden.“ [12].

Präsens denotes actions (events) which happen as if by themselves, and Futur I denotes actions (events) with hardships or obstacles along the way. That is why expressions with Futur I are characterized by a specific emphasis on the action or event [28, p. 54; 39, p. 232; 9, p. 125; 24, p. 87].

Präsen: „Bin bald zurück“, sagte sie [15].

Futur I: „Alle haben es gesehen. Sie haben den Hund auf mich gehetzt, er sollte mich beißen. Und die Hose werden Sie mir bezahlen müssen“ [12].

4) Präsen can be used in any type of sentences, whereas Futur I is almost impossible in clauses of purpose and condition, in subordinate clauses in the function of an object after verbs with the meaning of volition/intention or order, and is very rarely used in clauses of time, result and some others [37, p. 101–103; 35, p.127–130; 34, p. 34–35; 19, p. 100–102].

Präsen: „Bitte, mach die Tür fest zu, damit die Wellensittliche nicht fortfliegen“ [26].

Präsen: „Wasch dir die Hände, bevor du den kleinen Wilhelm anfasst“, sagte sie [12].

5) Futur I is more often used in formal speech, and future-related Präsen in informal speech [6, p. 238; 25, p. 86; 24, p. 70 et al.].

As mentioned above, Futur II and Perfekt are also rival forms. The following differences between the two forms are usually mentioned:

1) future-related Perfekt is more often used in subordinate clauses to denote a future action preceding some other future action, while Futur II is more often used in simple sentences [32, p. 331; 22, p. 44].

Perfekt: „Und später, wenn wir die Brandstelle untersucht haben, wird es sich noch ein paar Fragen an Sie geben“ [12].

Futur II: „Die Männer in Berlin wirst du bald kennen gelernt haben, es sind zwei, immer dieselben.“ [12].

2) future-related Perfekt, in contrast with Futur II, usually has no meaning of assumption [20, p. 24; 21, p. 107].

3) the forms differ in terms of register: future-related Perfekt is preferably used in informal oral speech, while Futur II is more often used in written, formal speech [35, p. 201; 40, p. 445; 32, p. 331; 4, p. 109; 22, p. 44].

In general, tendencies in choosing between rival forms Futur I/Präsen and Futur II/Perfekt are similar in terms of modality, register and sentence structure [3].

Having mentioned the peculiarities of forms use, we can point out factors that are strictly followed and make patterns (for example, when talking about certain types of
subordinate clauses where Futur forms cannot be used). However, most factors are not strict and not always taken into consideration when choosing a form.

For example, future-related Präsenz can be used to denote not only the nearest future but also the distant future:

„Man soll die Hoffnung nie aufgeben. Und vielleicht wird aus Jenny und Paul eines Tages ein Paar. Mir wäre es recht.“ [12].

Futur I can be used to denote not only the distant future but also the nearest future:

„Ich bleibe hier, Mizzi braucht das Zimmer ja nicht mehr. Sie wird sicherlich bald heiraten“ [26].

It should be mentioned that Präsenz and Futur I can denote actions having nothing to do with the present and entirely related to the future, as well as actions starting in the present and continuing in the future:


Thus, the future is expressed in the two languages with the help of several grammatical forms, each with their own semantic, structural and functional peculiarities.

III. METHODS AND MATERIALS

In the Theoretical background section we characterized the main grammatical forms with future meaning in Russian and German. Next step is to point out similarities and differences in means to denote a future action in both languages. Thus, a comparative analysis is the main method of research.

Quantitative analysis is used for both German and Russian grammatical forms with future meaning. Materials for quantitative analysis were collected from the books by contemporary German and Russian fiction writers (in German - Ch. Hein „Landnahme“ (2005), in Russian – L.Ulitiskaya „Medeya i ee deti“ (2009)) with continuous sampling method. In general, 566 contexts with future-related grammatical forms were analyzed in German and 191 contexts – in Russian.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The comparative analysis helps to understand the main relations between the forms in the two languages. The forms (and their frequency in analyzed texts) are given in the table.

The table shows obvious similarities and differences in the systems of forms with future meaning in Russian and German. Each language has two specialized grammatical forms with future semantics. In Russian, the forms are in opposition according to the category of aspect, which is reflected in their names. In German, Futur II is used specifically to denote a completed action in the future. In this respect it is opposed to Futur I, which has no clear-cut aspect characteristics. In addition, German forms with future semantics can be opposed in terms whether they "denote absolute or relative time", since Futur II and Perfekt are used to denote an action that precedes another action in the future. In this respect, German Future forms are considerably different from corresponding Russian forms, since the Russian language has no special forms to denote that one action precedes another action in the future [17, p. 124]. As a rule, to express precedence in the future, the same forms are used in Russian (i.e.: the Perfective aspect Future forms):

**TABLE 1. GRAMMATICAL FORMS WITH FUTURE SEMANTICS IN GERMAN AND RUSSIAN**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Imperfective Future (Futur I)</th>
<th>Perfective Future (Futur II)</th>
<th>Imperfective Present (Präsenz)</th>
<th>Perfective Aspect (Perfekt)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Russian language</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German language</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>79%爱</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Perfective aspect Future: Картошки нам купите? Два кило, пожалуйста. Мне Таню оставить не с кем, а она туда не дойдет, устанет [36].

The meaning of precedence of one action over another action in the future is very specific and, therefore, fairly rare. In particular, the proportion of Perfekt/Futur II forms in German fiction used for analysis was the following: 9 Perfekt forms (1.6%) and only 2 Futur II forms (0.4%).

Such low forms frequency can be explained by the fact that relative time is not necessary to denote every action that precedes another action. In German, the meaning of precedence is usually expressed by specialized tense forms in subordinate clauses, or if the order of actions in the text is broken.


Among the similarities is the fact that, in both languages, to denote a future action it is possible to use forms for which the meaning of future is not primary – Present and Past forms. However, in Russian the future is denoted predominantly by the specialized imperfective and perfective aspect Future tense forms, while the use of non-specialized forms is limited, whereas in German the reverse is true – the specialized Future tense forms (Futur I and
Futur II) are less frequent than their synonimic Präsens and Perfekt forms.

Perfective aspect Future and imperfective aspect Future: Маша ждет, буду наблюдать. – «Маша, не оставайся, буду наблюдать» [36].

Präsens: Und wenn dich einer fragt, wo du es hergast? Was machst du, wenn dein Vater danach fragt? – „Ach, mit fällt schon was ein“ [12].

The fact that non-specialized grammatical forms to denote a future action prevail in the German direct speech can, on the one hand, be explained by their structure. Non-specialized forms that denote a future action are simpler in their structure than specialized forms. Thus, they are the manifestation of effort in economy of language. On the other hand, the specialized forms with future semantics in German are fairly "young", and, apparently, that is why they are less grammaticalized than the Russian Future tense forms. Use of non-specialized forms is common since it has a long history, and it is especially true for Präsens with future meaning, which is today considered a neutral form to denote a future action. In connection with this, less frequent Futur I and Futur II forms, as opposed to Präsens and Perfekt forms, emphasize the importance of future events in sentences.

In Table 1, Futur I and Präsens forms are technically given under the imperfective aspect forms, whereas Futur II and Perfekt forms under the perfective aspect forms. Since there is no clear-cut aspect opposition in German, it may seem that it is only possible to talk about aspect-marked Futur II and Perfekt forms that denote perfect actions. However, German Präsens is mostly formed from terminative verbs with limits and purpose of action in their semantics. Futur I is also more often formed from terminative verbs. In particular, according to our statistics, terminative verbs were used in Präsens in 72% of cases under analysis, while Futur I – in 64% cases. Therefore, German Präsens forms correspond in aspect to Russian perfective aspect Future rather than to imperfective aspect Present. As for Futur I forms, they could be given in Table I between the imperfective aspect Future and the perfective aspect Future.

German Präsens and Russian imperfective aspect Present are somewhat similar. Both are synthetic and used to denote future actions, although their primary meaning is related to the present. Nevertheless, Present forms are more frequently used instead of Future forms in German rather than in Russian (Table 1). This can be explained by the fact that the Russian Present forms can only be made from imperfective verbs, whereas in German all verbs can be used in Präsens. That Present forms are relatively rarely used instead of Future forms in Russian can also be explained by the fact that there are perfective aspect Future forms as well.

Another similarity between the languages is that both in Russian and in German we can talk about forms used to denote the nearest future. The nearest future meaning is usually found in synthetic forms: in German, it is future-related Präsens [11, p. 115, 24, p.105], and in Russian – imperfective aspect Present and, to a certain degree, perfective aspect Future [29, p. 230; 38, p. 465–468]. That these forms have the nearest future meaning is due to the fact that their semantics is connected with the present:

Imperfective aspect Present: Я уезжаю. Маша. Присел попросить, - сказал он спокойно – «Уезжай, Маша. Присел попроси» [36].

Präsens: „Гут, dann gehe ich. Ich warte im Wohnzimmer auf dich.“ [12].

Future forms in both languages are similar in that they can mean actions not related to the present and actions that start in the present and continue in the future:

Perfective aspect Future: - Сейчас я такое написало – в жизни не догадаешься, - сказала Ника в пространство, и Лиза, все еще продолжая лить слезы, уже следила за мельканием Никной руки – «Сейчац ў тое парысіву – в жыцці не догадаецца», - скацала Ніка ў пространства, i Ліза, все еще падзялапаваўся літ' слягі, узяла сядаля за мел'камі Нікіною рукай [36].


Past forms – perfective aspect Past in Russian and Perfekt in German – have more differences rather than similarities. In Russian, perfective Past forms to denote future actions are rarely used and, thus, very expressive, whereas in German Perfekt has no substantial limitations in use and is frequent with meanings of perfective aspect Future or precedence of one future action over another. The two forms are similar in that they have a sense of completion.


Perfekt: „Und vergiss nicht, wenn die alten Knochen wieder zusammengewachsen sind, fahren wir zwei nochmal.“ [12].

To be fair, we should mention one more form in German that is used to denote the future – Präteritum. For example, in the question: Wann begann doch morgen die Vorstellung im Theater?. Such sentences are used to politely ask for information about future actions. At the same time the speaker as though apologizes to the interlocutor for having forgotten some previously received information. Thus, Präteritum is related to information about the future which was discussed in the past [33, p. 134]. Präteritum with future meaning is rarely used in German and that is why it is not analyzed in detail in this article.

V. Conclusions

Summing up our analysis of the Russian and German Future forms, we should note that there are both similarities and differences in their structure, semantics and use.

The differences are primarily connected with so-called "absolute" and "relative" use of forms. While Russian has no
such differentiation of forms, in German absolute and relative time is divided between verb forms. In Russian, with its developed category of aspect, tense forms with future semantics are opposed in terms of their aspect, whereas in German it is only possible to talk about tendencies in use of this or that Future form with terminative verbs.

Similarities are found in the structure of analytical Future forms – imperfective aspect Future in Russian and Futur I in German. However, Futur I can be used with any verb, whereas the imperfective aspect Future auxiliary verb can be used only with imperfective verbs. Präsens in German and imperfective aspect Present in Russian are fairly similar, both being syntactic forms used to denote the future, even though their primary meaning is the present. Nevertheless, Present forms instead of Future forms are more frequently used in German rather than in Russian.

There are also past forms with a secondary future meaning in both languages. Both forms have a sense of completion. But the German Perfekt is more frequently used than the Russian perfective aspect Past.

Identification of similarities and differences of the forms under comparison helps to understand the specifics of the two languages as far as the explication of future semantics is concerned. In the context of today's processes of globalization and interaction of cultures, such studies are extremely important and useful for successful intercultural communication.

The following research of the linguistic Future category in Russian and in German should focus on the selection of grammatical forms with future meaning depending on the speaker's intentions, and non-grammatical means of expression of the future in both languages.

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