

Ekaterina Vostrikova
Simultaneous readings of past-under-past in Russian¹

1. Introduction

This talk focuses on sentences where a past marked stative is embedded under past marked intensional verbs, as illustrated in (1).

(1) Three years ago, John said he loved Ann.

These type of sentences in English are compatible with two types of scenarios.

Scenario I (the back shifted reading): Three years ago, John came to me and said: “I loved Ann in the past, now I love a different person”.

The truth conditions in this case can be presented as follows:

(2) $\exists t[t < t_0 \ \& \ t \in 3 \text{ years ago} \ \& \ \forall \langle w', t' \rangle [\langle w', t' \rangle \in \text{Say-Alt}(\text{John}, w_0, t) \rightarrow \exists t'' [t'' < t' \ \& \ \text{John loves Ann at } t'' \text{ in } w']]]]$

- Both past tenses contribute to this semantics;
- The second past tense is past relative to the moment when the saying took place (three years ago)

Scenario II (the simultaneous reading): Three years ago, John came to me and said: “I love Ann!”.

The question this talk focuses on is how this type of reading is derived.

Not every language allows for this reading as readily as English.

Overall, three theoretical mechanisms have been proposed to explain the availability of simultaneous readings of past-under-past constructions.

The first mechanism involves an SOT rule, positing that the past tense in the embedded clause is not interpreted (Ogihara 1989; Abusch 1997; Kusumoto 1999, among others).

According to this theory, (1) can have 2 LFs: one with two past tenses (resulting in the back shifting) and one with only one real past tense (the matrix one), resulting in the simultaneous reading.

The second past is only a morphological reflex of the agreement with the matrix past.

(3) [PAST Three years ago John say [he loves Ann]]

Accordingly, the love relation is understood as simultaneous to John at the time he was saying those words (his ‘local now’ – the time when he finds himself in his doxastic alternatives)

¹ I thank Petr Kusliy for his help with this project.

- (4) $\exists t[t < t_0 \ \& \ t \in 3 \text{ years ago} \ \& \ \forall \langle w', t' \rangle [\langle w', t' \rangle \in \text{Say-Alt}(\text{John}, w_0, t) \rightarrow \text{John loves Ann at } t' \text{ in } w']]$

The second mechanism is the *de re* reading of the past tense (Abusch 1997; Heim 1994; Ogihara 1995; Sharvit 2018).

This is a very complex theory. In a nutshell:

- The past tense of the embedded clause is interpreted in the matrix clause (so it is a past relative to the real actual present)
- Two pasts are independent, and any relation is possible between them:
 - one can precede the other (back shifting)
 - they can overlap (simultaneity)
- The attitude establishes an isomorphism between two temporal relationships:
 - between the matrix past and the embedded past,
 - and
 - between the holder's local now and the time of the state described by the embedded predicate

Altshuler and Schwarzschild (2013) argue against the necessity of either of these mechanisms and propose a **third idea**.

- No special mechanism is needed for the simultaneous reading; there is no real ambiguity here.
- There is only one LF with two interpreted double pasts.
- The truth conditions in (2) do not require simultaneity, but also do not block it.
- In some languages past-under-past can only have a back shifted reading or the simultaneous reading is very limited.
- In these languages the simultaneous reading is blocked by a pragmatic competition with the present tense.
- The competition with the present tense leads to the cessation inference – inference that the embedded state is over for the holder by the time we called his local now.

I introduce the relevant aspects of this theory later in the talk.

The summary of the talk:

- I explore simultaneous readings of past-under-past **in Russian** and the role of cessation implicatures in deriving these readings;

- I make a novel empirical observation about the restriction on the simultaneous readings in Russian and I compare these three theories with respect to their ability to derive it;
- I show that this restriction follows naturally from the *de re* theory and cannot be explained by the other two theories;
- I show that the pragmatic competitor for the simultaneous reading is the double access reading of the embedded present tense (derived through a *de re* construal).

2. Simultaneous readings in Russian

2.1. The known facts

It is a well-established fact that the past tense in Russian, when embedded under a past-marked attitude verb, can get a simultaneous reading (e.g. Altshuler 2008).

Context: 3 years ago, Vanya came to me and said: ‘I love Anya!’

- (5) Tri goda nazad Vanja skaza.l, čto on ljubi.l Anju.
three years ago Vanya say.Past that he love.Past Anya.
‘Three years ago, Vanya said that he loved Anya’.

However, the availability of such readings is more limited compared to English.

An illustrative example of the restriction is provided in (6) (based on Ogihara & Sharvit’s (2012) Hebrew example).

- (6) #Vanja skazal, čto 4 by.lo nečetnym čislom.
Vanya say.Past, that 4 be.Past odd number
Intended: ‘Vanya said that 4 was an odd number’.

Intuitively, (6) is unacceptable because it suggests that the property of being odd is temporary and subject to change.

- SOT can be ruled out for Russian based on this example: this theory cannot explain the contrast between (5) and (6).
- We are left with two possibilities: the *de re* theory vs the pragmatic ‘no special mechanism theory’

2.2. The pragmatic competition theory (‘no special mechanism theory’)

- Past marked statives contribute an inference that the state does not hold at the current moment;

- (7) John was sick.
Inference: John is no longer sick

- This can be derived via a competition with the present tense:

(8) John is sick.

I will implement this theory in terms of Exh, Altshuler and Schwarzschild (2013) do this in terms of a pragmatic reasoning.

(9) [Exh_{Alt} PAST John be sick]

- Alt = {John was sick, John is sick}
- Exh asserts the prejacent and negates the only alternative distinct from it:

(10) $\llbracket(9)\rrbracket^{t_0, w_0} = \exists t[t < t_0 \ \& \ \text{John was sick at } t] \ \& \ \text{John is not sick at } t_0$

We can reason the same way about the embedded sentences.

(11) [PAST Vanya say [Exh_{Alt} [PAST 4 is odd]]]

- The pragmatic competitor for (6) is derived by substitution of the embedded past for the embedded present.

(12) Vanya skazal, čto 4 \emptyset nečetnoe čislo.
Vanya say.Past, that 4 Pres odd number
 ‘Vanya said that 4 is/was an odd number’

- Russian has a relative present tense – tense that can be interpreted as present relative to holder’s alternatives.

(13) $\llbracket(12)\rrbracket^{t_0, w_0} = T$ iff $\exists t[t < t_0 \ \& \ \forall \langle w', t' \rangle [\langle w', t' \rangle \in \text{Say-Alt}(Vanya, w_0, t) \rightarrow 4 \text{ is odd at } t' \text{ in } w']]$

- The resulting interpretation with Exh:

(14) $\llbracket(11)\rrbracket^{t_0, w_0} = T$ iff $\exists t[t < t_0 \ \& \ \forall \langle w', t' \rangle [\langle w', t' \rangle \in \text{Say-Alt}(Vanya, w_0, t) \rightarrow \exists t''[t'' < t' \ \& \ 4 \text{ is odd at } t'' \text{ in } w' \ \& \ \neg 4 \text{ is odd at } t']]]]$

Paraphrase: in the past Vanya said that in the past 4 was odd, but is no longer odd.

- The inference that the state of being odd is over for 4 from Vanya’s point of view makes (6) infelicitous (assuming people are rational).
- English behaves differently here, because it does not have relative present and, thus, no relevant competitor in this case (I will skip the discussion of this point).
- Something must be said about why this inference is not cancellable here unlike in the love example (I will set this aside).

How come (5) can get the simultaneous reading?

Implicatures are cancellable, thus, the sentence can get an interpretation without Exh:

(15) $\llbracket (5) \rrbracket^{t_0, w_0} = T$ iff $\exists t [t < t_0 \ \& \ t \in 3 \text{ years ago} \ \& \ \forall \langle w', t' \rangle [\langle w', t' \rangle \in \text{Say-Alt}(\text{Vanya}, w_0, t) \rightarrow \exists t'' [t'' < t' \ \& \ \text{Vanya loves Anya at } t''] \text{ in } w']]$

These truth conditions do not say anything about Vanya loving Ann at his local now.

But they are compatible with the continuation of love up to the local now (t'').

The prediction of ‘no special mechanism’ story: the cessation inference will always be of the shape: the embedded state was over for the attitude holder (Vanya, in our case) at the time he was speaking.

2.3 The empirical puzzle

The empirical puzzle I will address in this paper is the contrast between (5) (repeated for convenience as (16)) and (17).

Context: 3 years ago, Vanya came to me and said: ‘I love Anya!’

(16) Tri goda nazad Vanja skaza.I, čto on ljubi.I Anju.
three years ago Vanya say.Past that he love.Past Anya.
‘Three years ago, Vanya said that he loved Anya’.

Context: Yesterday, Vanya came to me and said: ‘I love Anya!’

(17) #Včera Vanja skaza.I, čto on ljubi.I Anju.
Yesterday Vanya say.Past that he love.Past Anya.
Intended: ‘Yesterday, Vanya said that he loved Anya’.

- The only difference between these cases is in the temporal adverbial in the matrix clause: ‘three years ago’ versus ‘yesterday’;
- The adverbial restricts the time of the saying event.
- When the saying event occurs too close to the actual present moment, as in example (17), the simultaneous reading becomes unavailable.

Intuitively, what goes wrong in (17) is that ‘love’ is a long state and if someone loved someone yesterday, it is implausible that the love is over today, which is what this sentence is implying.

If this characterization of facts is correct, we expect the simultaneous reading to become available for (17) if we are setting the context in such a way that the expectation that the love continues to the actual now is lifted.

This is borne out, as (17) is acceptable in the context given in (18).

(18) Context: Vanya is an unreliable guy. The day before yesterday he told me: “I love Masha!”, yesterday he told me: ‘I love Anya!’.

(19) **The empirical generalization:**

Simultaneous readings of past-under-past in Russian trigger the inference that the state of the embedded clause does not extend to the actual present.

This is unexpected under Altshuler and Schwarzschild's (2013) theory:

- The type of meaning they predict is always of the shape 'Vanya said (in the past) that he loved Anya before the time of speaking and he does not love her at the time of speaking'.
- This does not imply anything about whether the embedded state 'Vanya loves Anya' holds at the real now.

2.4 Another illustration of the same phenomenon in Russian

One naturally occurring example of English:

Context: Yesterday Biden said: 'Xi is a dictator!'

(20) Yesterday Biden said that Xi was a dictator.

The Russian version of this sentence is infelicitous in this context:

Context: Yesterday Biden said: 'Xi is a dictator!'

(21) #Včera Biden skaza.l, čto Si by.l dictatorom.
Yesterday Biden say.Past that Xi be.Past dictator.
Intended: 'Yesterday, Biden said that Xi was a dictator.'

But the simultaneous reading is available for (22):

Context: In 1933 Mandelshtam said: 'Stalin is a dictator!'

(22) V 1933 godu Mandel'shtam skaza.l, čto Stalin by.l dictatorom.
In 1933 year Mandelshtam say.Past that Stalin be.Past dictator.
'In 1933 Mandelshtam said that Stalin was a dictator'

- The difference between these examples is that in the actual present Xi is still a dictator, but Stalin is no longer a dictator (as he is dead now).
- The use of the past tense in (21) in Russian triggers the inference that the embedded state no longer holds (if what was said about Xi was true when it was said):
Xi is no longer a dictator now
- That would require that Xi died between yesterday and today or that he changed his ways.

This sensitivity to the truth value of the embedded sentence at the actual present is not predicted by Altshuler and Schwarzschild's (2013) theory.

- As per this theory, without the embedded implicature both sentences have the following meaning:

(23) $\exists t[t < t_0 \ \& \ t \in \text{in } 1933/\text{yesterday} \ \& \ \forall \langle w', t' \rangle [\langle w', t' \rangle \in \text{Say-Alt}(\text{Holder}, w_0, t) \rightarrow \exists t'' [t'' < t' \ \& \ \text{Xi/Stalin be a dictator at } t'' \ \text{in } w']]]]$

- In both cases, we can only derive the implicature that the state was over for the holder by the time of speaking (yesterday or in 1933).
- This would simply correspond to the back shifted reading.
- But this is not the implicature we get.

However, the right inference is directly predicted by the *de re* theory complemented by the theory of competition between tenses.

3. The solution of the puzzle in terms of the *de re* theory.

3.1. Ingredient 1: The *de re* theory of past-under-past

Abusch 1997:

- Any tense can be interpreted *de re*.
- A *de re* reading of the past tense is compatible with both the simultaneous and the back-shifted interpretation.

Let's consider our example again:

(24) Včera Vanja skaza.l, što on ljubi.l Anju.
Yesterday Vanya say.*Past* that he love.*Past* Anya.
'Yesterday, Vanya said that he loved Anya'.

(Reminder: good only under 'a short unreliable love reading' with the inference that the love is over today)

The embedded PAST is interpreted in the main clause.

Step 1:

(25) [PAST [yesterday Vanya [[said PAST] [λ₂ t₂ Vanya loves Anya]]]]

Step 2: the final LF

(26) [PAST [3[PAST yesterday [Vanya [[said t₃] [λ₂ t₂ Vanya loves Anya]]]]]]]

(27) $[[\text{say}]^{w_0, g, t_0} \ [\lambda t': \text{the object of believe (res)} \ [\lambda Q_{\langle s, \langle i, t \rangle \rangle} : \text{the intension of the predicate of times} \ [\lambda y_e : \text{the attitude holder} \ [\lambda t'': \text{the time of saying} \ \exists p. t' = \text{the time } z \text{ such that } P(w)(t'')(z) \ \& \ \forall \langle w'', t'' \rangle \in \text{Say-Alt}(y, w_0, t''). \ Q(w'')(t'')(z) = T]]]]]]]$

The attitude verb introduces quantification over temporal concepts fitting for the holder (Vanya)

This temporal concept establishes an isomorphism between two relationships:

the past time of saying and the past time moved from the embedded clause

and

the local now of holder and the time of the embedded state

$$(28) \llbracket (26) \rrbracket^{w_0, g, t_0, c} = T \text{ iff } \exists t [t < t_0 \ \& \ \exists t' [t' < t_0 \ \& \ t' \in \text{yesterday} \ \& \\ \exists P [t = \text{the time } z \text{ such that } \underline{P(w_0)(t')(z)} \ \& \\ \forall \langle w'', t'' \rangle \in \text{Say-Alt}(Vanya, w, t'): Vanya \text{ loves } Anya \text{ at the } z \text{ such that } \underline{P(w'')(t'')(z)}]]]$$

The relation between the time of the state of loving with respect to the time when Vanya locates himself in his doxastic alternatives is the same as the relation between the past of the main clause and the past of the embedded clause.

These two past tenses are independent; thus, any relationship is possible between them.

Possibility 1: Corresponding to the back-shifted reading

The concept can be past-oriented, as shown in (29):

$$(29) \lambda w. \lambda t. \lambda t'' \text{ such that } t'' \text{ is 2 years before } t.$$

the loving happens at the z such that z is 2 years before the local Vanya's present time

the past of the embedded clause is two years before the time of saying²

Possibility 2: Corresponding to the simultaneous reading

The relation can be the one of overlapping (this is what we are interested in!)

$$(30) \lambda w. \lambda t. \lambda t'' \text{ such that } t'' \text{ overlaps } t.$$

the loving happens at the z such that z overlaps the local present time for Vanya

the past of the embedded clause overlaps the past time of saying

² **Possibility 3: The option where the embedded past is after is ruled out by the Upper Limit Constraint.** I have nothing new to say about this, so I set this issue aside here.

Interim conclusion:

- De re theory derives simultaneity of the two pasts.
- We still need to compute the cessation inference (the inference that the embedded state does not hold at the actual now).

3.2. Ingredient 2: The derivation of the cessation inference

3.2.1 Structural alternative

The presence of PAST on the stative triggers the cessation inference.

(31) [Exh_{ALT} PAST [3[PAST yesterday [Vanya [[said t₃][λ₂ t₂ Vanya loves Anya]]]]]]

To compute the contribution of Exh, we make a substitution in the position corresponding to PAST that was moved from the embedded clause (Katzir 2007, Fox and Katzir 2011).

We substitute it with its competitor: the present tense.

(32) [PRES [3[PAST yesterday [Vanya [[said t₃][λ₂ t₂ Vanya loves Anya]]]]]]

Exh asserts its prejacent and negates the result of interpretation of (32) (this is our alternative)

We first need to understand the resulting interpretation of this alternative in (32).

3.2.2 The meaning of *de re* construal for present tense

The idea in a nutshell:

- The resulting alternative is the *de re* LF for present tense.
- This is the LF that results in the double access reading of the present tense! (Abusch 1997)
- Thus, the predicted competition is with the double access reading.

What the double access reading is can be appreciated by looking at embedded present in English. In English this is the only reading available for the embedded present tense.

(33) Yesterday/3 years ago/10 years ago, Vanya said he loves Anya.

- This reading requires two things: that the loving relationship holds at Vanya's "now" and that continues up to the actual present time (hence, double access)
- Accordingly, its negation equivalent to: either the loving relationship does not hold at Vanya's "now" or it does not continue up to the actual present time.
- In other worlds:
if the loving relationship holds at Vanya's 'now' then it does not continue up to the actual present time.

- Given that the readings of past-under-past we are focusing on are the simultaneous, the inference we get is: love does not continue up to the actual present time
- This correctly captures the cessation inference we perceive in the Russian examples.

A technical implementation of the double access reading (based on Abusch 1997).

(34) [PRES [3[PAST yesterday [Vanya [[said t_3][$\lambda_2 t_2$ Vanya loves Anya]]]]]]

(35) $\llbracket (34) \rrbracket^{w_0, g, t_0} = T$ iff $\exists t[t < t_0 \ \& \ \exists t'[t' < t_0 \ \& \ t' \in \text{yesterday} \ \& \ \exists P[t = \text{the time } z \text{ such that } P(w_0)(t')(z) \ \& \ \forall \langle w'', t'' \rangle \in \text{Say-Alt}(Vanya, w_0, t'): Vanya \text{ loves Anya at the } z \text{ such that } P(w'')(t'')(z)]]$

The temporal isomorphism between two relationships:

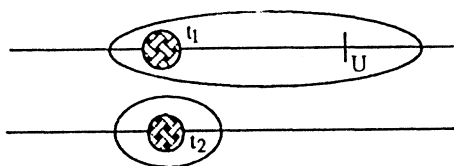
the time of saying and the present time moved from the embedded clause

and

the local now of holder and the time of the embedded state (love)

- Because of the restriction called ‘the upper limit constraint’ these concepts cannot be future oriented.
- The only possible relationship between the present tense and the past tense is that of an overlap.

(36) Illustration copied from Abusch 1997:



The concept has to be something like this:

(37) $\lambda w. \lambda t. \lambda t''. t''$ covers the period stretching a year in both direction from t in w

Then, we correctly capture the meaning of the double access: if what Vanya said was true at the time he said it, he still loves Anya now.

(38) $\exists t'[t' < t_0 \ \& \ t' \in \text{yesterday} \ \& \ \text{Vanya loves Anya at the } z \text{ such that covers the period stretching a year in both direction from } t' \text{ at } w_0]$

Going back to the computation of the cessation implicature:

Exh negates the double access alternative

(39) $\neg \exists t[t^0 < t_0 \ \& \ \exists t'[t' < t_0 \ \& \ t' \in \text{yesterday} \ \& \ \exists P [t = \text{the time } z \ \text{such that } P(w_0)(t')(z) \ \& \ \forall \langle w'', t'' \rangle \in \text{Say-Alt}(Vanya, w_0, t'): Vanya \text{ loves Anya at the } z \ \text{such that } P(w'')(t'')(z)]]]$

There is no temporal concept for Vanya such that (both things hold):

- in Vanya's alternatives it would pick the time of loving when applied to his local now
- in the real world it would pick the actual present when applied to the time when Vanya said his words

Hence, his temporal concepts are of 'short loving'

- (39) excludes any concepts for Vanya that in the real world could pick any time overlapping with real now, such as

(40) $\lambda w. \lambda t. \lambda t''. t''$ covers the period stretching 1 whole day in both direction from t in w

- This is, however, compatible with the back-shifted concepts (not interesting for us):

(41) $\lambda w. \lambda t. \lambda t''$ such that t'' is 2 years before t .

(42) $\exists t'[t' < t_0 \ \& \ t' \in \text{yesterday} \ \& \ Vanya \text{ loves Anya at the } z \ \text{such that } z \ \text{is 2 years before } t' \ \text{at } w_0]$

- Importantly, this is also compatible with the simultaneous concepts as long as they won't reach the real now when applied to the real world and the time when he said his words yesterday

(43) $\lambda w. \lambda t. \lambda t''. t''$ covers the period stretching 5 hours in both direction from t in w

Then, if what Vanya said was true at the time he said it, he does not love Anya now:

(44) $\exists t'[t' < t_0 \ \& \ t' \in \text{yesterday} \ \& \ Vanya \text{ loves Anya at the } z \ \text{such that covers the period stretching 5 hours in both direction from } t' \ \text{at } w_0]$

Because the negation of the double access alternative leaves us only with these 'short-term' concepts not reaching to the actual now, we get the inference that Vanya does not love Anya anymore today.

This makes this sentence acceptable only in a funny 'short term' scenarios.

3.2.3 The parallelism between double access in English and past-under-past in Russian

In general, there is an agreement in the literature that *de re* construal of the present tense is necessary, because it derives the double access in English and it is the only way to do so.

The double access in English is a phenomenon that has an empirical manifestation.

It is standardly illustrated with examples like this:

Context: 2000 years ago, Joseph said to his friends: ‘I love Miriam’.
(45) #2000 years ago, Joseph said he loves Miriam.

This is bad in English because,

- the double access is the only interpretation available for the embedded present tense in English;
- This requires that if what he says is true at the time he says it, it still must be true now;
- That is impossible as no one lives 2000 years (which is a necessary condition for loving).

Observe that the bad Russian example with ‘yesterday’ is a mirror image the infelicitous English example:

- we change the present for past in the embedding;
- instead of placing the time of speaking too far away in the past, we place it too close to the actual ‘now’.

Context: Yesterday, Vanya came to me and said: ‘I love Anya!’
(46) #Včera Vanja skaza.l, čto on ljubi.l Anju.
Yesterday Vanya say.Past that he love.Past Anya.
Intended: ‘Yesterday, Vanya said that he loved Anya’.

The main point of this paper is that *de re* reading of past-under-past in Russian is also manifested empirically, via these inferences that the state does not hold anymore that we clearly empirically observe.

De re is the only theory that allows for transparency of the tense.

3.2.4 Can the present tense in Russian get the double access reading?

I proposed that *de re* construal of the past tense in Russian pragmatically competes with the double access reading of the present tense.

It is standardly assumed that the present tense in Russian does not have a double access reading.

Instead, it has a plain relative reading.

The corresponding example is completely fine in Russian:

(47) Dve tysjači let nazad Iosif skaza.l, on ljubi.t Miriam.
 two thousand years ago Joseph say.**Past** he love.**Pres** Miriam.
 ‘2000 years ago, Joseph said he loved Miriam’.

(48) $[(47)]^{w_0, g, t_0} = T$ iff $\exists t[t > t_0 \ \& \ t \in 2000 \text{ years ago} \ \& \ \forall \langle w', t' \rangle [\langle w', t' \rangle \in \text{Say-Alt}(\text{John}, w_0, t) \rightarrow \text{John loves Ann at } t' \text{ in } w']]$

- It is a well-established fact, however, that double access is a strictly stronger reading than simple simultaneous delivered by the relative present.
- Double access requires both simultaneity and that the embedded state continues up to the actual present.
- Relative present only requires simultaneity.
- The proposal is that Russian present tense can have a double access reading, but this fact is masked by the existence of a strictly weaker plain simultaneous reading.
- The double access reading is the only competitor for the past-under-past as both are derived via a de re construal.

4. Obligatoriness of the cessation inferences

Cessation inferences are cancellable in matrix clauses:

(49) John was sick, he is still sick.

So, why cannot we cancel the cessation inference in this case and make the sentence acceptable without changing the context to the ‘short term love’?

Context: Yesterday, Vanya came to me and said: ‘I love Anya!’

(50) #Včera Vanja skaza.l, što on ljubi.l Anju.
*Yesterday Vanya say.**Past** that he love.**Past** Anya.*
 Intended: ‘Yesterday, Vanya said that he loved Anya’.

The idea would be that the sentence can have a **de re** LF without Exh.

The cessation inference comes from Exh, since Exh is absent, the sentence can get a plain simultaneous interpretation without additional inference of cessation by the time of speech.

(51) [**PAST** [3[PAST yesterday [Vanya [[said t_3]] [$\lambda_2 t_2$ Vanya loves Anya]]]]]]

(52) $[(51)]^{w_0, g, t_0} = T$ iff $\exists t[t < t_0 \ \& \ \exists t' [t' < t_0 \ \& \ t' \in \text{yesterday} \ \& \ \exists P [t = \text{the time } z \text{ such that } P(w_0)(t')(z) \ \& \ \forall \langle w'', t'' \rangle \in \text{Say-Alt}(Vanya, w_0, t'): Vanya \text{ loves Anya at the } z \text{ such that } P(w'')(t'')(z)]]]$

This is not possible. Why?

One option we can consider is that maybe the inferences associated with past-under-past are mandatory in Russian for some reason.

However, this is wrong. Consider a perfectly consistent example below³:

(53) *Včera kogda my prišli iz teatra*
Yesterday when we came from theater

Vanja skaza.l, čto u nego bolela golova.
Vanya say.Past that by him hurt.Past head

Ona u nego do six por bolit.
It by him until this times hurt

‘Yesterday, when we came from the theater, Vanya said he had a headache. He still has it now’.

There is no mandatory inference that the headache stopped by now.

What is the relevant difference between ‘love’/’dictatorship’ and ‘pain’?

It seems to be that there is no contextual expectation that pain will extend for two days.

There are other cases when pragmatic inferences seem to be not cancellable (Magri 2011; Thomas 2012, 2014):

(54) #Chomsky was a linguist.
Inference: Chomsky is no longer alive

(55) #Some Italians come from a warm country.
Inference: Not all Italians come from a warm country

It has been argued that there is something special about these cases that makes exhaustification mandatory.

What is in common between all of them and our example is that the stronger alternative is not logically entailed (so it can be negated by Exh), but it is contextually entailed leading to a problem.

The idea is that alternatives that are contextually (but not logically) entailed by the prejacent are mandatorily negated by Exh (Magri 2011; Thomas 2012, 2014).

In the standard context, being a linguist is considered an enduring property of a person. Thus, the statement that there is a past tense when Chomsky was a linguist, taken together with the context, entails that Chomsky is a linguist now. Given that such alternatives are mandatorily negated, we get the infelicity of (54).

Extending this to our cases (somewhat vaguely):

- **Love:** The standard context is that love lasts at least a year after it is declared. The past tense de re construal, taken together with this context, entails the double access

³ I thank Petr Kusliy for this example and the discussion of this point.

alternative (simultaneous to Vanya and continuing until today), thus this alternative is mandatorily negated.

- **Dictatorship:** The standard context is that dictatorship is a permanent property and does not change until the person dies. The past tense de re construal, taken together with this context, entails the double access alternative, thus this alternative is mandatorily negated.
- **Oddness of 4:** The standard context is that being odd or even is a permanent property of a number. The past tense de re construal, taken together with this context, entails the double access alternative, thus this alternative is mandatorily negated.

5. Conclusion:

- A simultaneous reading of past-under-past in Russian can only be derived via a de re construal;
- A simultaneous reading of past-under-past in Russian pragmatically competes with the double access reading of the present tense;
- Russian present tense can have a double access reading;
- It is difficult to detect it in other contexts due to the presence of the strictly weaker simultaneous reading.

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