

# Ling-F. Puzzles in Semantics I, Puzzle A (Week 1): Syllabus

V-NYI, Winter 2023

Up to date as of January 16, 2023

## Time

Block 1, Week 1: Mon/Wed/Fri (Jan 16/18/20), 10:00–11:20am NYC / 4:00–5:20pm Konstanz / 6:00–7:20pm SPb

## Instructor

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## Course description

This “puzzle” focuses on two types of readings that emerge in a range of environments (e.g., in negated imperatives, under ‘not want’, under ‘fear’, etc.): (i) ABSTAIN readings, implying willingness to prevent someone from intentionally engaging in an activity, and (ii) AVOID readings, implying willingness to prevent a potentially unintended outcome. The ABSTAIN vs. AVOID distinction has a variety of grammatical reflexes cross-linguistically, e.g., (anti-)licensing of ‘some’-indefinites in English: *Don’t call anyone!* (which asks the addressee to abstain from intentionally engaging in the activity of calling someone) vs. *Don’t call someone!* (which cautions the addressee against accidentally calling someone). We will primarily focus on perfective vs. imperfective aspect and distribution of indefinites in Russian. We will see that to capture the relevant facts we need to carefully consider the complex interplay of syntax, semantics, and pragmatics of situation descriptions.

## Background

The course presupposes basic background in formal semantics (predicate logic, lambda calculus). If you do not have such background, you should still be able to follow the empirical discussion, but not the technical part. The decision is yours, but do consider taking the Introduction to Semantics (Ling-C) course in this same time slot instead.

## Course materials

All course materials will be added to the NYI website. Please do not share these materials with anyone outside NYI without the instructor's permission.

## Readings

There are no obligatory readings for this class. Some of the papers mentioned in class will be uploaded to the course materials folder as "background readings".

## Pass/fail criteria

The main criteria for passing or failing this class are (i) attendance, and (ii) participation in discussion (more on this in class).

## Schedule (subject to change)

Date	Topics	Background readings (optional)
1/16	Introducing the puzzle.	Goncharov 2018, 2020
1/18	Crash-course on event semantics, aspect, and dependent indefinites.	Champollion 2015; Dickey 2015; Yanovich 2005; Pereltsvaig 2008
1/20	Accounting for the puzzle. Wrap-up.	

## Bibliography

- Champollion, Lucas. 2015. The interaction of compositional semantics and event semantics. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 38(1). 31–66. doi:10.1007/s10988-014-9162-8.
- Dickey, Stephen. 2015. Lexical and grammatical aspect. In Nick Riemer (ed.), *The routledge handbook of semantics*, 338–353. Routledge. doi:10.4324/9781315685533.ch19.
- Goncharov, Julie. 2018. Intentionality effect in imperatives. In *Proceedings of Formal Approaches to Slavic Linguistics (FASL) 27*, Michigan Slavic Publications.
- Goncharov, Julie. 2020. Dynamic presupposition of 'want' and polarity sensitivity. In Joseph Rhyne, Kaelyn Lamp, Nicole Dreier & Chloe Kwon (eds.), *Proceedings of Semantics and Linguistic Theory (SALT) 30*, 779–800. doi:10.3765/salt.v30i0.4823.
- Pereltsvaig, Asya. 2008. Russian *nibud'*-series as markers of co-variation. In Natasha Abner & Jason Bishop (eds.), *Proceedings of the West Coast Conference on Formal Linguistics (WCCFL) 27*, 370–378. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Press.
- Yanovich, Igor. 2005. Choice-functional series of indefinite pronouns and hamblin semantics. In Efthymia Georgala & Jonathan Howell (eds.), *Proceedings of Semantics and Linguistic Theory (SALT) 15*, 309–326. doi:10.3765/salt.v0i0.2921.