The Spatial Semantics and Expressive Dimensions of the Russian Prepositions *v* and *na*

The Case of *v* and *na Ukraine*

Maya Melnik

Advisor: Veneeta Dayal

Submitted to the faculty of the Department of Linguistics
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts

Abstract

Russian is an East Slavic language that exhibits alternations between the spatial prepositions *v* 'in' and *na* 'on' in certain land- and nation-centric contexts. Most notably, the prepositions *v* and *na* are strongly ideologically associated with anti-Kremlin and pro-Kremlin stances, respectively, when referring to the nation of Ukraine — *v Ukraine* 'in Ukraine' and *na Ukraine* (lit.) 'on Ukraine.' However, this phenomenon seems specific to Ukraine, as other nations do not exhibit such ideological alternations when changing prepositions (e.g. Cuba). Although scholars suggest a distinction between *v* as container-oriented and *na* as surface-oriented, given the abstract status of nations and borders, it is insufficient to describe them as containers and surfaces, even when metaphorizing borders and sovereignty. This thesis explores the linguistic question of spatial relations with respect to the geopolitical question of ideology. It considers whether there is a non-idiosyncratic linguistic basis to the expressive associations arising from the use of *v* or *na* for Ukraine. It does so against the backdrop of what has been proposed for spatial semantic analyses of *v* and *na* and their metonymic extensions.

Table of contents

List of figures

List of abbreviations

1	first person
2	second person
3	third person
sg	singular
pl	plural
m	masculine
f	feminine
n	neuter
ACC	accusative
DAT	dative
GEN	genitive
NFN	nonfinite
NEG	negative
NOM	nominative
NPI	negative polarity item
INS	instrumental
POS	possessive
PRP	prepositional
PRS	present
PST	past
Q	question particle
RFL	reflexive
SBJ	subjunctive

A note on transcription: the Russian palatal <ь> is transcribed as the apostrophe <'>, <x> as <kh>, and <щ> as <shch>.

Acknowledgments

My favorite part of theses and dissertations — right after the parts relevant to whatever research I'm conducting — is the "Acknowledgments" page, a rare insight into a complete stranger's life and gratitude. I'm delighted that it's finally my turn for this timeless ritual.

I owe so much to everyone involved in this project, including but not limited to:

My advisor, Veneeta Dayal: Thank you for the countless edits, thoughtful comments, and perennial support in this project. I am forever grateful that she adopted my thesis and believed in my ability to see it through to the end. This truly would have been impossible to complete without her mentorship.

My second reader, Maria Piñango: Thank you for providing near-instantaneous feedback, as well as for introducing me to metonymy's role in linguistics all those years ago.

My professors for LING 490/491, Raffaella Zanuttini and Jason Shaw: Thank you for providing guidance at every stage of the thesis writing process, from last-minute topic changes to last-minute panic.

Every linguistics instructor I've ever had: Thank you for cultivating such a wonderful department where I could wander down so many avenues dedicated to the study of language.

Our little cohort of seniors, Ava, Isaiah, Jaden, Jem, Alara, Sarah, and Ester: Thank you for the endless laughter and joy amid the stresses, agonies, horrors, etc. I guess I forgive them for sacrificing me in the Salemverse.

My parents: Thank you for relearning your mother tongues to teach them to me.

And Larry (the one that lives in my house): Thank you for your kindness, encouragement, and unwavering faith in the importance of my writing.

Chapter 1

Introduction

The Russian prepositions *v* <в> and *na* <на> are typically translated into English as "in" and "on," respectively. Although they are two separate lexical items, there is a surprising amount of overlap in their usage, with *v* and *na* sometimes being interchangeable with one another without affecting the meaning of a sentence in any obvious way. This is demonstrated in the following examples: example (1) shows the use of *v*, while example (2) shows the use of *na*.[1]

(1) *Poezd   jedet   **v** Moskvu*
     train.NOM go.PRS.3.sg to Moscow.ACC
     'The train is going **to** Moscow.'

(2) *Poezd   jedet   **na** Moskvu*
     train.NOM go.PRS.3.sg to   Moscow.ACC
     'The train is going **to** Moscow.'

Native speakers seem unclear about this as well; a quick search for this exact phrase about a train heading to Moscow yields a link to otvet.mail.ru, a Russian question-and-answer site where most respondents prefer *v*. Several accept *na* in addition to *v*, but no respondents

---

[1]In Russian, *v* and *na* serve the same purpose as the English "to," and the direction is encoded in the use of accusative ACC case. This use of *v* and *na* will not be the focus of the present study.

exclusively accept *na.*[2]

However, there are also sentences where *v* and *na* clearly meaningfully distinguish two spatial situations. One minimal pair is shown below, differing only by the use of *v* and *na.* In example (3), the only available reading is that of a poster posted indoors on walls inside a room. In example (4), the only available reading is for spatially open contexts such as the outside of a house or a street.

(3) *Objavlenije*   **v** *uglu*
announcement.NOM **in** corner.PRP
'The announcement is **in** the corner (inside a room).'

(4) *Objavlenije*   **na** *uglu*
announcement.NOM **on** corner.PRP
'The announcement is **on** the corner (outside, on a street corner).'

While there may appear to be an obvious distinction of two-dimensional open spaces and three-dimensional closed spaces, this distinction is not as consistent as one may think. For example, islands typically take *na*, except for large islands, which take *v*, but not *all* large islands (Levin 1989). Cuba is four times larger than Sardinia geographically, yet the *na* rule for islands seems to override the *v* rule for countries.

(5) **na** *Kube*
on Cuba.PRP
'**in** Cuba'

(6) **v** *Sardinii*
in Sardinia.PRP
'**in** Sardinia'

As a result, rigorously defining the semantics of these prepositions is challenging, with the many exceptions and idiosyncrasies complicating a possible semantic analysis.

These prepositions have additionally taken on a uniquely expressive political dimension.

---

[2][link][archive]

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, Ukraine's push for a closer relationship with the West, the Russian annexation of Crimea, and the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the prepositions *v* and *na* in reference to Ukraine have become ideologically associated with pro-Kremlin and anti-Kremlin stances (Devlin 2016). Referring to a person, place, thing, or event connected to Ukraine using *v Ukraine* 'in Ukraine' is strongly associated with an anti-Kremlin political position, while *na Ukraine* (lit.) 'on Ukraine' is strongly associated with a pro-Kremlin position. This view aligns with Krivoruchko (2008), who argues that although *na Ukraine* and *v Ukraine* used to be stylistically unmarked, these uses became indicative of cultural identity and social values following the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the independence of Ukraine.

While it is clear that there is an ideological association with each prepositional phrase (PP), it is unclear if the meaning of these PPs is compositional. That is, is there something about the spatial semantics of the prepositions *v* and *na* that makes these ideological readings more likely, or is it idiosyncratic and arbitrary? Although we cannot yet make a full determination, I suggest that topological *na* generates a stronger metonymic reading of the preposition when a *v* alternative is also available. Overall, the semantics of *v* and *na* in these contexts goes beyond topology.

This thesis takes on the challenge of the *v/na* alternation in three steps. In Chapter 2, I outline the literature on spatial semantics of prepositions. I introduce the key terminology essential to this thesis and the myriad spatial models common to the overall literature. Furthermore, I provide a few key examples that elucidate how the building blocks of spatial semantics vary cross-linguistically.

In Chapter 3, I focus in on the spatial semantics of Russian prepositions. I summarize the literature, focusing specifically on the prepositions *v* and *na* and how extant analyses employ previously discussed models of spatial semantics. Finally, I introduce a metonymic lens through which to analyze the spatial semantics of the prepositions *v* and *na* in non-expressive contexts.

In Chapter 4, I extend the semantics onto a metaphorical stage and examine how the analysis holds up for ideological and expressive readings in the context of Ukraine. I explain the history of both the *v Ukraine* and *na Ukraine* constructions and present evidence of the strong expressive dimensions of *v/na Ukraine* from previous literature and my own analysis of Russian-language sources with an overt ideological bent, namely *Radio Svoboda* 'Radio Liberty' and the Russian Ministry of Defense. I conclude by connecting the metonymic analysis of *na* to the expressive dimensions of the *v/na Ukraine* constructions.

Chapter 2

Overview of prepositional spatial semantics

2.1   Key terms: object & environment

Imagine a cup on a table. Assume that that you know what a cup is and that you know what a table is. Following this, *on* should be simple too. Now consider figure 2.1 below. Is the cup still *on* the table?
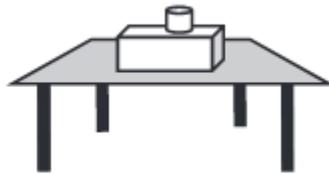

Figure 2.1: A cup *on* a table, reproduced from Zwarts (2017:10).

No, you may object. The cup is not on the table. You might prefer to say that it seems the cup is on the *block* rather than the table.

Similarly, consider the figure below. Is the black ball *in* the bowl? What about the gray balls? It seems the grey balls, but not the black one, are more appropriately described as

being *in* a bowl.
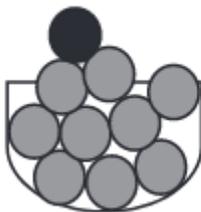
Figure 2.2: A ball *in* a bowl, reproduced from Zwarts (2017:10).

But what exactly are the criteria for an object to be considered *on* or *in* another one? We will refer to the study of the expressions of spatial relations, such as an object being *in*, *on*, *above*, or *below* another object, as *spatial semantics*.

The spatial relations examined are between what are interchangeably called the figure, located object, locatum, or trajector, and what are also interchangeably called the ground, reference object, relatum, or landmark (Zwarts 2017).[1] We will use the terminology of the *object* and the *environment* respectively.[2] In the earlier example of the cup on the table, the *object* is the cup, and the *environment* is the table. In the case of the ball(s) in the bowl, the object(s) are the balls, and the environment is the bowl.

One point worth clarifying is the case of the intervening object. It is possible for there to be some intervening object that does not interfere with the felicity of *in* or *on*, such as "a casserole *on* a table" that is *in* a casserole dish and/or *on* a table with a tablecloth. Although from a geometric standpoint these are intervening objects, they are not contextually salient and are an expected part of the environment modulo pragmatic relevance.

Spatial prepositions, therefore, are relational. They describe the relationship between an object and its environment. The types of relationships that prepositions describe will be

---

[1]For a more comprehensive list, please also see Retz-Schmidt (1988).

[2]This is because this thesis is primarily concerned with nations as environments, so "reference object" and "landmark" are less applicable terminology. "Object" and "environment" are not established terms in the literature, but they are most appropriate for this work.

addressed in section 2.2.

2.2 Types of prepositions: topological & projective

The literature distinguishes between spatial prepositions in two key classes: *topological* prepositions and *projective* prepositions (Zwarts 2017; Herskovits 1986). Topological prepositions describe topological relationships (e.g. *by, at, in, on*), and projective prepositions describe projective relationships (e.g. *in front of, behind, above, below*).

Topological prepositions are the most fundamental category of spatial relations (Herskovits 1986). Zwarts (2017) notes that topological prepositions tend to be shorter, and that in languages with case marking, they tend to be some of the first cases to appear. Topological prepositions describe situations where the object is not spatially separate from the environment, and where the position of an observer, real or imagined, does not contribute to the meaning. (Herskovits 1986). The two prototypical topological prepositions we will take as examples in this section are the English prepositions *in* and *on*.

In the examples below, the object (cup) is not spatially separate from its environments (the drawer or dresser, respectively). Additionally, no matter what angle the scenario is looked at from, the spatial relations remain the same, and the observer is not projecting an axis to describe the relationship between the object and environment. The observer could be on the ceiling, lying on the floor, standing on the floor, embedded inside the wall, and that would not change the truth conditions of these examples.

(7)   The cup is *in* the drawer.

(8)   The cup is *on* the dresser.

On the other hand, projective prepositions are those that require viewing the object from some point of observation. In these cases, the object and the environment are in relative positions based on one of six axes: front, back, right, left, up, and down (Herskovits 1986).

The two prototypical projective prepositions we will take as examples in this section are the English prepositions *in front of* and *behind*.

In the examples (9) and (10), the uses of *above* and *below* are contingent on an observer (real or otherwise)'s eye, line of sight, and front/back axes to describe these situations. Contrast this with our previous examples of topological prepositions, which are not observer-dependent.[3] The observer's eye and line of sight are presumed to be on a similar horizontal axis as the ketchup and spinach. (Contrast a preposition such as *besides*, which may be better suited for a top-down view, such as looking down from above, as opposed to being on the same horizontal axis.) The front and back axes, respectively, are dependent on the direction the observer is facing. Suppose the ketchup and spinach are lined up on a table. If the observer were standing on the other side, the *in front of* and *behind* relationships would be reversed, reversing the object-environment relationships.[4] Therefore, *in front of* and *behind* are projective prepositions reliant on the observer projecting an axis from their viewpoint.

(9)   The ketchup is *in front of* the spinach.

(10)   The spinach is *behind* the ketchup.

Although the focus of this thesis is on topological prepositions in Russian, it is important to understand the distinction, as certain models of spatial semantics are better suited to projective prepositions. This will be addressed in section 2.3.

If the previous section established that prepositions are relational, this section establishes the key distinctions between the two types of prepositions, topological and projective. Projective prepositions are observer-reliant and "project" an axis to define the spatial relation between the object and its environment, and topological prepositions are observer-neutral and do not project axes to define the spatial relations, as the object is typically not spatially

---

[3]Recall our discussion of the train heading to Moscow in Chapter 1.

[4]This is where previous terminology, such as located object and reference object, is better suited.

separate from the environment.

2.3   Spatial models

Having now established the types of prepositions typically proposed in the literature, we will now review the frameworks used to analyze and deconstruct their semantics.

Across spatial semantics, there are a number of models and frameworks through which spatial relations are examined. Zwarts (2017) analyzes the following as typical models used in spatial semantics research.

1. *Formal models*: Formal semantic models, vector-based models

2. *Cognitive/conceptual models*: Functional models, geometric models, radial models

3. *Hybrid models*: Pragmatic models, force-dynamic models

I will now summarize the contents of each model and evaluate its usefulness generally, and narrow down the models that will be most useful for our work.

Formal models

Some formal models use formal semantic operators to map objects to environments, resulting in statements like BECOME(x, ON(y)), GO(x, ON(y)). Another formal model, the vector-based model, uses vectors to represent distances and directions that comprise the semantics of a preposition. For example, something being *above* contains a vector's direction, and these can be quantified with something like *three feet above* to describe the vector's magnitude. However, this works best for projective prepositions such as *in front of* and *behind*, and struggles with topological prepositions where objects are not spatially separate — there is no clear magnitude, and often the direction between the two objects is not clear.

Cognitive and conceptual models

Of the cognitive models, functional models are the most commonly used. Functional models focus on the functionalities of the environment. *In*, for example, may be acceptable when the environment takes on the functionalities of a container (Vandeloise 1991). These offer some flexibility compared to geometric models, where the relationship between the object and the environment is said to be determined geometrically (Zwarts 2017). While promising at first glance, if we look back at figure 2.1 of the cup on the block on the table, we can see that although the cup is *on* the table from a geometric perspective, there is something infelicitous about saying the cup is on the table: something being between the two precludes that.[5] A functional model can explain that in English, *on* takes environments with the functionality of a surface. Additionally, if spatial prepositions were chosen on the basis of geometry, then we would expect stronger cross-linguistic consistency across spatial prepositions and for "languages to be very similar in this domain" (Zwarts 2017:9). That is, however, not the case (Bowerman and Choi 2001).

Brugman and Lakoff (1988) propose a radial model of spatial semantics: the meaning of a preposition comprises one prototypical meaning and the meaning derived from that prototype. For something like *in*, there is some prototypical IN and every use of *in* is individuals' variation on the prototypical IN.

Hybrid models

Recall that geometric models fail due to there being criteria that geometry alone cannot account for. Pragmatic models combine spatial semantics with Gricean implicatures, and they propose that we choose prepositions based on a combination of geometric intuitions and pragmatic principles. For the preposition *on*, these models successfully repair the question of the contextual saliency of the intervening object. Following Grice (1975)'s maxims of

---

[5]See section 2.1 for how this can be pragmatically circumnavigated if the intervening object is not contextually salient.

cooperative conversation[6], as well as Horn (1984)'s notions of Q- and R-based implicature[7], saying *on* for figure 2.1 to describe the cup not-quite-on the table would be infelicitous because it would be more relevant and truthful to say it is *on* the *block* instead (Zwarts 2017). The intervening block, in this case, is very contextually salient. If the cup were on a saucer instead, saying *on* would not be infelicitous, as that is expected and not contextually salient. It would also be infelicitous to describe the cup as *near* the block or table, as *near* presupposes some contextually salient distance between the object and its environment. Per cooperative Q-implicature, *near* is not the most informative available option; *on* is.

Force-dynamic models posit that prepositions explain an object's relation to force. A cup, for example, is prevented from falling by being *on* a table, and the table exerts force on the cup. This also succesfully explains the infelicity of the example with a cup on a block on the table, as the block is what is exerting the force. Zwarts (2017) links this to our functional models from earlier: functions are forces with different directions.

This section has given a brief overview of the various frameworks used to analyze and explain spatial semantics. This serves as contextualization for section 2.4, which demonstrates specific approaches to cross-linguistic spatial semantics.

2.4 Cross-linguistic variations in encoding spatial relations

Although our eventual focus is on Russian spatial semantics, in this section, I will outline foundational literature in cross-linguistic spatial semantics. Cross-linguistically, spatial relations are encoded in a variety of ways: verbs, cases, prepositions, and postpositions (Talmy

---

[6]In cooperative conversation, speakers follow the Maxims of Quality (truthfulness), Quantity (not saying too much or too little), Relation (relevance), and Manner (clarity) (Grice 1975).

[7]Speakers follow Principles of Least Effort in cooperative conversation: Q-based (hearer-driven, say as much as you can without saying too much) and R-based (speaker-driven, say what is relevant) (Horn 1984).

2000).

Jackendoff and Landau (1991) identify the fundamental geometries necessary to analyze spatial relations in English prepositions. For geometries of the environment, they identify "[v]olumes, surfaces, and lines" as the requisite geometries, and they identify "relative distance" with respect to "interior" and "contact" as the relevant criteria for the topological prepositions *in* and *on* (Jackendoff and Landau 1991:232). However, we can only claim this as the case in English. Bowerman and Choi (2001) demonstrate extensive cross-linguistic variation in perception of spatial relations between English-speaking and Korean-speaking children. This is shown below in figure 2.3.
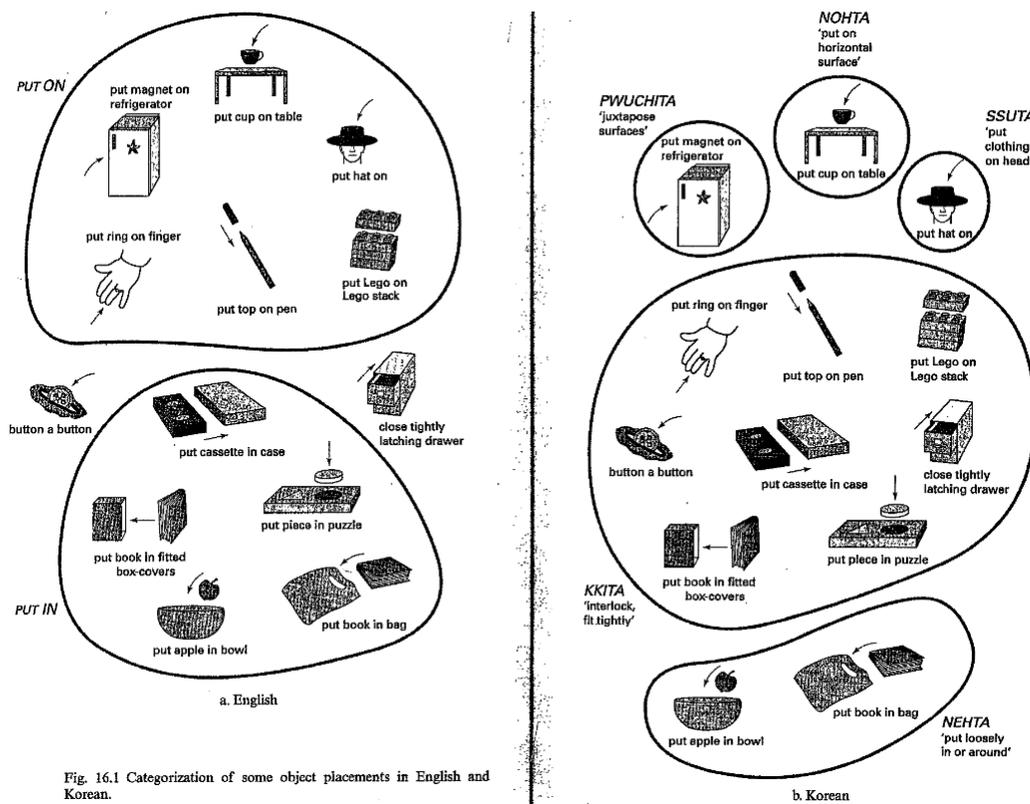
Fig. 16.1 Categorization of some object placements in English and Korean.

Figure 2.3: Variation in spatial categorization between English-speaking and Korean-speaking children, reproduced from Bowerman and Choi (2001:482-483).

In this case, we will be comparing English phrasal verbs that contain the prepositions *in* and *on* ("put on," "put in") to Korean verbs of related spatial situations, such as *pwuchita* 'to stick to a (juxtaposing) surface,' *kkita* 'to squeeze in; to fit tightly in, interlockingly,' and

nehta 'to fit loosely in'.[8] Following Jackendoff and Landau (1991)'s fundamental geometries, in English "put on" and "put in," the distinction between the choice of *on* or *in* depends on the relative distance from the interior of the environment, which dictates the choice of *in*, and depends on the level of contact, which dictates the choice of *on*. This is demonstrated in figure 2.3, where English-speaking children clearly choose *in* to correspond to interior relations and *on* to correspond to contact relations.

By contrast, interior relations and contact relations are not the primary distinguisher of verb choice among Korean-speaking children. The situations described by *kkita* 'to squeeze in; to fit tightly in, interlockingly' and *nehta* 'to fit loosely in' comprise situations that do not correspond neatly to the English "put in" situations. Instead of interior relations distinguishing *in/on* as in English, a "tightness of fit" category distinguishes verb choice between *kkita* and *nehta*. A pencil case with just a few pencils would take *nehta*, but a pencil case squeezed full of pencils would take *kkita*. Therefore, the building blocks of conditions for grammaticality for different spatial terms vary cross-linguistically.

Such distinctions are present even in languages related to one another. Let us examine the case of German and English, both in the West Germanic language family. In German, "attachment" is a relevant condition that distinguishes the use of either *auf* or *an*, both of which translate to uses of English *on*. The "contact" condition in English *on* is satisfied in German as *an* (Munnich et al. 2001). *Auf* would be used for an un-attached object (a cup on a table); *an* would be used for an attached object (a coat hanging on a wall). This further demonstrates that spatial relations are encoded differently, but still relatedly, across different languages, and that the conditions for each spatial particle (preposition, postposition, spatial verb, or case ending encoding a spatial relation) differ in distinct ways, which often causes spatial particles to be in complementary distribution with one another.

---

[8]Special thanks to Min Lee for her help with glosses, translations, and acceptability judgments.

2.5 Atomizing further: definitions of English *in/on*

Having established that spatial relations are encoded differently — yet relatedly — cross-linguistically, we will narrow in on the prepositions *in/on* in English and how they are analyzed and defined.

The earlier building blocks that Jackendoff and Landau (1991) propose — "[v]olumes, surfaces, and lines," "relative distance" to the interior, and "contact" — are a good starting point. They observe that spatial prepositions in English filter out many properties and descriptions of spatial objects, leaving only properties deemed essential, "primarily the boundedness, surfaceness, or volumetric nature of an object and its axial structure" in the case of environments (Jackendoff and Landau 1991:232). Bowerman and Choi (2001) corroborate these findings, identifying that children are able to identify key properties of spatial relations encoded in prepositions in their native languages.

Spatial relations form the basis of many English-language (and cross-linguistic) metaphors (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). Lakoff and Johnson (1980) attribute land areas in English as being described with the preposition *in* as a metaphor for human territoriality, explaining the use of *in* less so as a perception of boundedness and more so as a perception of territoriality. For example, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) write that a sentence like "There is a lot of land *in* Kansas" is acceptable only because Kansas is conceptualized as a container-like, bounded area: the land *in* Kansas can be quantified.

However, the *in* corresponding to territory equivalency does not necessarily hold cross-linguistically despite Lakoff and Johnson (1980:29) explicitly claiming, that "[t]here are few human instincts more basic than territoriality." For example, Russian uses *na* 'on' for land areas such as the Caucasus — *na Kavkaze* (lit.) 'on the Caucasus.' Additionally, Polish takes *na* — a preposition that has a similar semantics to Russian *na* — very frequently for land

areas, e.g. deserts (*na pustyni*) and Belarus (*na Białorusi*) (Cienki 1989; Šarić 2014).[9]

Herskovits (1986) argues that prepositions center around some ideal meaning and that all prepositions gravitate towards that ideal meaning. This resembles Brugman and Lakoff (1988)'s radial prototype theory, but Herskovits (1986) argues that an ideal meaning is more abstract than a prototype, as it is some geometrical ideal or set of relations. The varying uses are described in terms of *tolerance* for deviation from the ideal meaning. This is unlike Jackendoff and Landau (1991), who posit that spatial semantics are built off of geometric fundamentals.

Herskovits (1986) also provides a descriptive account of the English-language prepositions *in* and *on*. *On* is given the following definition: "*on*: for a geometric construct X to be contiguous with a line or surface Y; if Y is the surface of an Object$_Y$, and X is the space occupied by another object O$_X$, for O$_Y$ to support O$_X$" (Herskovits 1986:140). This approach has a functional component: one object must *support* the other, also giving it a force-dynamic dimension. There is also a notion of contiguity, which similarly resembles the contact requirements of functional and force-dynamic models' representations of *on*.

The definition of *in* is given as follows: "*in*: including of a geometric construct in a one-, two-, or three-dimensional geometric construct" (Herskovits 1986:149). The variety of dimensional options here warrants more interest: one would typically describe a two-dimensional object as a surface, something that would go with *on* or Russian/Polish *na*. However, Herskovits (1986) analyzes all container environments as *in*. Two- and one-dimensional objects are formally included in her definition, but they present a bit of a challenge, as one would not say that a letter (like "A" or "B") is *in a page.

Overall, spatial semantics is approached in a variety of ways cross-linguistically. Many of the key notions we have examined here — containment, contact, surfaces, and other fundamental geometries — will serve as a basis for the next chapter on Russian.

---

[9]Russian does not take *na* for deserts: to describe something in the desert, one says *v pustyne* "in (the) desert", not *na pustyne "on (the) desert".

Chapter 3

Narrowing in on the spatial semantics of Russian prepositions

3.1   The literature of Slavic spatial semantics

In the previous chapter, I have provided an overview of the different models of spatial semantics that are relevant for thinking about the English prepositions *in* and *on*. I also established that spatial semantics is relational, and described the cross-linguistic variation in the spatial relations that different spatial particles encode. In this chapter, I focus on the spatial semantics of Russian prepositions. I first provide a review of the literature, specifically focusing on the Russian prepositions *v* and *na*. Then, I expand into metonymic approaches to *v* and *na*, and how metonymy can help us explain alternations in *v* and *na*.

We will begin by re-examining the figures from Chapter 2. They are reproduced below as figures 3.1 and 3.2. Russian experiences similar infelicities to English when *na* 'on' and *v* 'in' are used to describe the cup as being *on* the table or the black ball as being *in* the bowl. Therefore, they seem to operate at least somewhat similarly with respect to contact and containment conditions. As in English, the cup would be better described as being on the *block* on the table, and the *grey* balls as being in the bowl.
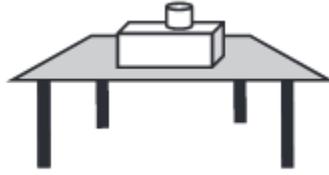
Figure 3.1: A cup "on" a table, reproduced from Zwarts (2017:10).
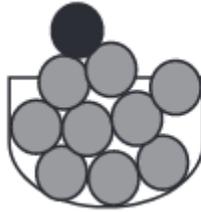
Figure 3.2: A ball *in* a bowl, reproduced from Zwarts (2017:10).

Although scholars of Slavic linguistics have described the prepositions *v* and *na*, little literature does so comparatively. Most literature follows a Herskovits (1986)-like approach and posits a set of ideal and ideal-adjacent meanings with a series of exceptions.

When analyzing prepositions in idiomatic speech, (Mukharlyamova et al. 2020:101) label *na* as describing "placement on the surface of a spatial landmark" and *v* as "location inside or movement inside a spatial landmark."

(11) *Skol'ko   ni vertetsya,   a   nekuda detsya:* **na** *nebo   vysoko,* **v**
      how.much NPI twist.NFNRFL but nowhere get.to   **on** sky.ACC high   **in**
      vodu   gluboko.
      water.ACC deep

      'No matter how you twist about, there is nowhere to flee: to go **into** the sky is high,

      and **into** the water is deep.'   (Mukharlyamova et al. 2020:101)

In example (11), the differences between Russian *na* and *v* and English *on* and *in* begin to emerge. Describing an active motion towards the sky and the water in English uses the preposition "into." Within the context of this example in Russian, the sky takes *na*, and the water takes *v*. The boundedness constraints presented in the cross-linguistic literature

thus far seem sufficient to account for this: for Russian prepositions, the sky is framed as unbounded, while water is not. In English, the exclusive grammaticality of *in/into* captures both the sky and the water as bounded. Using *on* in the English translation would be ungrammatical.

Across the Russian National Corpus, however, both *na nebo* (lit.) 'on the sky' and *v nebo* 'in the sky' are widespread. *Na nebo* has 3,696 samples across 2,171 texts, and *v nebo* has 4,296 samples across 2,291 texts. Therefore, although the Mukharlyamova et al. (2020) example seems to demonstrate a clear preference for *na* when the preposition object is *nebo* 'sky,' the Russian National Corpus indicates that they are near interchangeable.

Expanding to Slavic languages more generally, Šarić (2014) compares several Slavic languages — Croatian, Polish, Russian, and Slovenian — and the spatial concepts present in them. She observes that *na*, present in all four languages with varying spatial constraints, is consistently used in contexts "conceptualized as concrete or metaphorical surfaces" (Šarić 2014:61). She describes Russian *na* as occurring in situations of contact, and similarly observes overlap in its uses with *v*, which she describes as primarily a containment relation. When there is overlap, she writes, "It is important whether an area is primarily observed as an area with closed and defined boundaries in which other objects can be enclosed, or as an open area or surface whose boundaries are not important" (Šarić 2014:67). In examples (12) and (13) below, in (12) the field would be conceptualized as an open space, but in (13) the field may be a taller, grassier area that feels more enclosed. This would fall into the functional model-type discussed earlier: the distinction is between bounded container-like objects and non-container surfaces.

(12) *My sidim*   **na** *poljane.*
      1.pl sit.PRS.1.pl on field.PRP
      'We are sitting **on** a field.'

(13) *My sidim*   **v** *poljane.*
      1.pl sit.PRS.1.pl in field.PRP
      'We are sitting **in** a field.'

Levin (1989) similarly describes the distribution of *v* as for "a location within an object that is viewed as some kind of a container" and *na* as "location on the surface of an object" (Levin 1989:3). Immediately, however, he presents a large number of exceptions. Cities, administrative regions, and villages take *v*, except abstract references to rural areas, which take *na*.

(14) **V** *nash-em*   *sel-e*   *postroili*   *novuju*   *shkol-u.*
     in 1.pl.POSS.INS village-PRP build.3.pl.PST new.ACC new.m.ACC school-ACC

     '**In** our village, they built a new school.'   (Levin 1989:5)

(15) *Rol'*   *intelligentsii*   **na** *sel-e*   *osobenno velika.*
     role.NOM intelligentsia-GEN **on** village-PRP especially large

     'The role of the intelligentsia **in** a village is especially great.'   (Levin 1989:5)

In example (14), the concrete space of the village itself is referred to, as that is where construction occurs, and therefore, the sentence uses *v*. In example (15), the more abstract space of the village's social community is what is referred to, and therefore *na* occurs.

Peninsulas (including Alaska, which is geographically not completely peninsular) take *na*. Continents also take *na*, except for their names, which take *v*.

(16) **v** *Azi-i*
     in Asia-ACC
     '**in** Asia'

(17) **na** *aziatsk-om kontinent-e*
     on Asian-PRP continent-PRP
     '**on** the Asian continent'

In example (16), the continent *Azia* 'Asia' takes *v*, while the reference to the continent (then described as Asian), takes *na*.

Cienki (1989) somewhat challenges the notion of Russian *na* as used exclusively for surfaces, arguing that there must be other relations to the surface for *na* to be used. According to him, in example (18), the relevance of the hook is not its surface-ness. Instead, what is

relevant is an attachment criterion. Similarly, it is contact with a linear periphery in addition to its surfaceness that allows *na* in (19), not just the town square being an unbounded surface (Cienki 1989). (In fact, town squares tend to be pretty bounded.) Thus, drawing on Jackendoff and Landau (1991), Cienki (1989) proposes that attachment as a function is also a crucial component of Russian *na*. This explains how example (19) does not draw on the force-dynamic notion of contact but uses *na* nonetheless.

(18)　*polotentse **na** krjuk-e*
　　　towel.NOM **on** hook-PRP
　　　'the towel **on** a hook'　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　(Cienki 1989:63)

(19)　*magazin　**na** ploscad-i*
　　　store.NOM **on** town.square-PRP
　　　'the store **in** the town square'　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　(Cienki 1989:62)

Cienki (1989) also notes that *v* does not always seem to have a perfectly intuitive container component. In example (20), the corner itself does not constitute a container. Cienki (1989) proposes that it a speaker-based conception of boundaries causes the corner to be seen as separate from the rest of the room. In example (21), no such speaker-based segmentation seems to occur, resulting in the use of *na* and a broader reading of the announcement in an open, non-container street.

(20)　*Objavlenije　**v** uglu*
　　　announcement **in** corner.PRP
　　　'The announcement is **in** the corner (inside a room).'

(21)　*Objavlenije　**na** uglu*
　　　announcement **on** corner.PRP
　　　'The announcement is **on** the corner (outside, on a street).'

This notion of speaker-projected boundaries distinguishing where something is *v* also holds for example (22). Though the middle of the room is also not a container, because the speaker projects boundaries that distinguish it from the peripheries of the room, it can be used with *v*.

(22) *Kreslo* **v** *seredin-e* *komnat-y.*
      armchair.NOM **in** middle-PRP room-GEN

      'The armchair is in the middle of the room.'   (Cienki 1989:70)

Thus, Cienki (1989) cites boundedness and boundaries, be they real or projected by a speaker, as a distinguisher for when Russian *v* can be used. The use of *na* is described as requiring at least one of contact, support, or attachment to an environment.

Kustova (2001) presents an analysis of *na* and identifies five clusters of meaning that *na* takes and their metaphorical extensions: support and pressure, change in state, direction, goal, and relational/degree meanings. These are unlike the exclusively surface-focused analyses other scholars have been partial to, primarily because Kustova (2001) focuses on the metaphorical uses of *na*. While metaphorical extensions are addressed to some degree in Mukharlyamova et al. (2020) through the focus on idioms, the idioms chosen for analysis in the article do not examine *na* across the board.

Crucial to note is that Kustova (2001) does not shy away from an analysis of *na* as related to surfaces. The support and pressure category of meaning she identifies would best be described using a force-dynamic model, but when she describes change-in-state- and direction-related clusters of meaning, she describes them as oriented towards non-point and non-container environments — not surfaces per se, but not *not* surfaces. Her goal and relational meanings are the most metaphorical, non-spatial extensions of *na*.

Shmatova (2011) takes a human-centric, functional approach, describing *na* as being used in situations where the subject is sitting or lying down. Highlighting horizontal properties of the environment would use *na*, while highlighting vertical properties would use *v*. However, a picture hanging on a wall or a towel hanging on a wall are decidedly non-horizontal contexts that take *na*, as seen in (23). This horizontal-vertical analysis could be rescued by a perception of the wall as a horizontal surface tilted 90 degrees and lacking any vertical boundaries. However, this distinction would then be more precisely described as encoding a functional surface/container model, as that would not require any rotation.

21

(23) *Kartina*   *visit* **na** *sten-e*
      picture.NOM sit   **in** wall-PRP

‘The picture is hanging **on** the wall.’

In summary, the dominant viewpoint in the spatial semantics literature on Russian is that *v* corresponds to boundedness prepositions, while *na* corresponds to unboundedness prepositions (Šarić 2014; Cienki 1995). A functionality-oriented viewpoint is that *v* corresponds to containers and *na* corresponds to surfaces (Kustova 2001; Mukharlyamova et al. 2020; Levin 1989). There are also more niche frameworks connecting *v* to verticality and *na* to horizontality (Shmatova 2011). The latter are, to some degree, extensions of container/surface conceptions.

3.2   Expanding on metonymy and the framework in Kalyuga (2020)

Thus far, the literature we have reviewed has revolved around concepts pulled from geometric and functional models: boundedness, surface-ness, container-ness. We will dedicate this section to a different, more cognitive framework proposed by Kalyuga (2020), focusing on metaphor and metonymy. Considering our interest in metaphorical extensions of *v* and *na* with respect to *ideological* reference to Ukraine, Kalyuga (2020) provides the most comprehensive approach relevant for our analysis.

Before proceeding, I will provide a definition of our key term: metonymy. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) define metonymy as a device through which one entity stands in for another. An example would be using “the White House” (the president’s residence) to stand in for the entire executive branch. (In the sentence “The White House wants to fire several thousand federal employees,” it is not the building doing the firing.) Another example would be that of the use of “Picasso” to stand in for the works of Picasso. (“The museum’s Picasso is located in its own room.”) Lakoff and Johnson (1980) take care to note that metonymy, in addition

to being referential, highlights which part is most relevant to stand in for the whole. In the case of the Picasso, the same sentence could be rephrased as "The museum's 'Self Portrait' is located in its own room," and the reference of the sentence — Picasso's "Self Portrait" painting — would remain the same. However, this would not suggest the importance of Picasso as an artist in the same way.

I will now return to Kalyuga (2020)'s argument that *v* and *na* are used metonymically. Kalyuga (2020) argues that *v* is associated with a container environment, and *na* is associated with a surface environment. However, she observes that islands, despite being surrounded by water, tend to take *na*:

(24) *rasti   na ostrove*
      grow.NFN **on** island.PRP

      'to grow **on** an island.'   (Kalyuga 2020:182)

Most notably, Kalyuga (2020) observes that both *v* and *na* can be used metonymically in a whole-for-part manner. Example (24) can be analyzed as metonymically referring to the agricultural components of the island. A clarifying minimal pair is provided below in examples (25) and (26). In example (25), only the canonical (still metonymic) reading of sitting in the seat of an armchair is available. However, in (26), the most acceptable reading is a metonymic reading of sitting on the arm of the armchair. Thus, the use of *v* and *na* for the seemingly same reference acts as a metonymic whole-for-part stand-in of what the speaker thinks is most relevant. In the case of *v*, the seat is more container-like, and thus more deserving of *v*; *na* is used to refer to the more surface-like arm of the armchair.

(25) *sidet'   v kresle*
      sit.NFN **in** armchair.PRP

      'to sit **in** an armchair'   (Kalyuga 2020:185)

(26) *sidet'   na kresle*
      sit.NFN **on** armchair.PRP

      'to sit **on** an armchair'   (Kalyuga 2020:185)

From the previous discussion of the literature, we establish that the boundedness-unboundedness and container-surface dichotomies are the most common. We also established that container-surface dichotomies are the ones with the most exceptions and counterexamples, most notably in the form of nations, as well as semi-open spaces such as corners of rooms. The bounded-unbounded dichotomy has more promise due to its flexibility, and Cienki (1989)'s speaker-oriented boundaries provide a degree of subjectivity that can explain variations in the same reference object.

However, boundedness does not account for the inconsistency in *v/na* across islands. Islands are geographically bounded by water and varyingly politically bounded (sovereign nations or subsidiaries), but do not take *v/na* following those distinctions. This is demonstrated in examples (27) and (28). Both Cuba and Sardinia are large islands, but they do not follow our predictions of political boundedness resulting in a preference of *v* for Cuba, or the earlier rule of *na* for islands in the case of Sardinia (Levin 1989).

(27) **na** *Kube*
      on Cuba.PRP
      '**in** Cuba'

(28) **v** *Sardinii*
      in Sardinia.PRP
      '**in** Sardinia'

Kalyuga (2020)'s metonymic account explains distinctions between *v* and *na* concrete objects such as armchairs and trees. A further extension of this theory of semantic metonymy is that of when Napoleon invaded Russia, it is described using *na*, as shown in example (29). Using *na* highlights the eventive component of Napoleon's invasion of Russian; when *v* is used, it can only be construed as Napoleon going to Russia, and not an eventive reading of his invasion. This indicates that *na* has *stronger* metonymic readings. Rather than the literal meaning that *v* generates, *na* causes a distinctive reading of *Rossija* 'Russia' standing in for the event of invasion.

(29)   *Napoleon*   *poshel*   **na** *Rossij-u*
      Napoleon.NOM go.3.sg.m.PST **on** Russia-ACC
      'Napoleon invaded Russia.'

(30)   *Napoleon*   *poshel*   **v** *Rossij-u*
      Napoleon.NOM go.3.sg.m.PST **in** Russia-ACC
      'Napoleon went to Russia.'

Citing Lakoff and Johnson (1980), Kalyuga (2020) further argues that the spatial senses of prepositions determine their metaphoric or metonymic extensions in Russian prefixes and prepositional phrases. The spatial sense of *v*, for example, Kalyuga (2020) analyzes as denoting CONTAINER, BOUNDARY, or PERPETUAL INACCESSIBILITY. (Most) geographic areas are conceptualized as bounded areas and therefore use *v*.

Non-spatially, Kalyuga (2020) extends the CONTAINER metaphor to apply to notions such as wholes (comprising parts) and areas of interest. Many more are included, but of interest is the notion that *v* metaphorically extends to wholes, shown in examples (31) and (32). This supports the notion that *na* more strongly extends to parts, as demonstrated in the earlier Napoleon examples (29) and (30).

(31)   **V** *kofe*   *soderzhitsja kofein*
      in coffee.PRP contain.PRS caffeine.NOM
      'Coffee contains caffeine.'   (Kalyuga 2020:106)

(32)   **V** *knige*   *pjat' glav*
      in book.PRP five   chapters.NOM
      'The book contains five chapters.'   (Kalyuga 2020:106)

Kalyuga (2020) defines the exclusively spatial components of *na* as corresponding to the functions of CONTACT, SUPPORT, and PERPETUAL ACCESSIBILITY with a lesser geometric component of being "on top of" or "up." (Lesser, as *na* can be used for examples like there being a spider on the ceiling, even though clearly the spider is below the ceiling. This is also the case in English.)

The most clear contrast between *v* and *na* in Kalyuga (2020)'s analysis is in perpetual

accessibility, a perceptual analog to the boundedness condition we have described earlier. There is no clear metonymic obverse corresponding to *na* metaphorically extending to a part (of a whole). Instead, Kalyuga (2020) analyzes *na* also as a whole-for-part metonymy. Instead of container metaphorical extensions, *na* encodes surface/support metaphorical extensions. For example, although the word for the whole *okno* 'window' is used in example (35), the reference is the sill. Meanwhile, the closed-off court in example (33) takes *v* because of its inaccessibility, referring less metonymically to the event of the court (the trial) and more so to the literal interior of the courtroom.

(33) *Vozvrashchat'sja* **v** *sud*   *posle obed-a*
      to.return   **to** court.textscprp after lunch-ACC
      'To go back to court after dinner.'   (Kalyuga 2020:189)

(34) *Vaza*   *stoit*   **na** *okne*
      vase.textscnom stand.PRS on window.PRP
      'A vase stands on the window(sill).'   (Kalyuga 2020:184)

Thus, the *v-na* alternation cannot be exclusively attributed to the spatial relation between the object and the environment.

Another metonymic account of *na* used for geographic space is for "landmarks for a space near the boundary of a landmark," where in the examples below *reka* 'river' must take *na* to refer to the proximal riverbank rather than the river itself. This is another whole-for-part case, wherein the river's bank (a part) is implied by its linguistic whole (the bank) by the use of na.

(35) *gorod*   **na** *rek-e*
      city.textscnom **on** river-textscprp
      "city near the river'   (Kalyuga 2020:196)

In summary, Kalyuga (2020)'s analysis centers around metonymy rather than functional/geometric approaches. If spatial relations completely accounted for preposition choice, there would not be such intra-linguistic variation.

3.3 Why metonymy, why for Ukraine?

Following Kalyuga (2020)'s analysis, I propose that *na* lends itself more strongly to metonymy, particularly whole-for-part metonymy, when there is a *v* alternative available for the same referent. The acceptable contexts rely on this metonymy, creating the surface-container distinction analyzed by other scholars of Slavic linguistics.

Consider the following armchair examples, repeated again in examples (36) and (37). For the scholars that consider *v/na* to be primarily distinguished on the surface-container basis, the *na* case would be more surface-like, while the *v* case would be more container-like. This, while not wrong, is better captured by the metonymy framing, wherein *kreslo* 'armchair' stands in for the arm (the non-container, surface-like portion) of the chair.

(36) *sidet' v kresle*
      sit.NFN **in** armchair.PRP

      'to sit **in** an armchair'   (Kalyuga 2020:185)

(37) *sidet' na kresle*
      sit.NFN **on** armchair.PRP

      'to sit **on** an armchair'   (Kalyuga 2020:185)

However, this metonymic analysis does not only refer to the physical parts of physical wholes. Consider the examples below (38) and (39), also repeated from earlier. In the situation in example (39), *na* is only acceptable due to the abstract metonymic reading not of the literal space of the village itself, but of the abstraction of villages in general. This is very strongly reminiscent of a systematic metonymy found in English, where a location stands in for some event or institution. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) calls this PLACE-FOR-INSTITUTION metonymy. For example, in the sentence "Hollywood is promoting independent movies this year," "Hollywood" does not refer to the location itself, and instead refers to the film industry based in the Los Angeles area.

(38) **V** *nash-em   sel-e   postroili   novuju   shkol-u.*
      in 1.pl.POSS.INS village-PRP build.3.pl.PST new.ACC new.m.ACC school-ACC

      '**In** our village, they built a new school.'   (Levin 1989:5)

(39) *Rol'   intelligentsii   **na** sel-e   osobenno velika.*
      role.NOM intelligentsia-GEN **on** village-PRP especially large

      'The role of the intelligentsia **in** a village is especially great.'   (Levin 1989:5)

Let us also return to to the Napoleon examples, which I have repeated here in examples (40) and (41). Similarly to the village examples above in (38) and (39), when *v* is used, only the literal reading is available. This is how one would describe Napoleon crossing at customs and border patrol for tourism purposes. However, when *na* is used, only the metonymic, abstracted reading is available. *Na* is only possible when discussing going to Russia not in the literal sense, but in the metonymic sense where *Rossija* 'Russia' represents a conflict on the soil. This abstracted military sense is demonstrated in example (40), where the only available reading is that of invasion. Conversely, example (41), which differs only on the basis of *v*, merely refers to Napoleon traveling to the literal territory of Russia.

(40) *Napoleon   poshel   **na** Rossij-u*
      Napoleon.NOM go.3.sg.m.PST **on** Russia-ACC

      'Napoleon invaded Russia.'

(41) *Napoleon   poshel   **v** Rossij-u*
      Napoleon.NOM go.3.sg.m.PST **in** Russia-ACC

      'Napoleon went to Russia.'

We can thus see in the above examples cases where both *v* and *na* are available for the same referent, i.e. the geometry of the environment does not preclude one or the other, *na* generates metonymic readings.

3.3.1   On the rare and literal *v Kube* 'in Cuba'

Let us consider for further evidence the case of Cuba, one other nation whose prepositional distribution allows for both *v* and *na*. This alternation lacks ideological implications. The

preferred preposition for Cuba is *na Kube*, per an informal grammaticality judgment from 5 native speakers of Russian. This variation is demonstrated in figure 3.3.
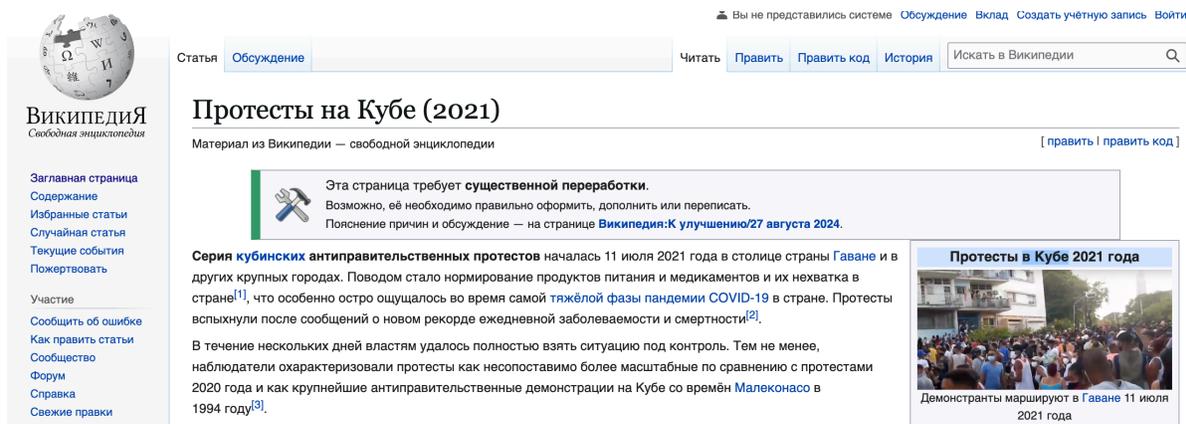

Figure 3.3: The Russian-language Wikipedia page covering the 2021 protests in Cuba exhibits a *v/na* alternation with respect to *Kuba* 'Cuba.'

The *na Kube* <на Кубе> construction appears in the headline, but *v Kube* <в Кубе> (highlighted) is the header on the right-side image.

Islands in general take *na*, and referring to being on an island is *na ostrove* 'on an island.' Cuba, as an island nation, is inherently at conflict with the expected *na* for islands and the *v* for nations rule. Sardinia, per the Russian National Corpus, is an island but not a nation, yet remains split between *v* and *na*: 25 texts with 28 samples for *v Sardinii* 'in Sardinia' and 22 texts with 29 samples for *na Sardinii* 'in Sardinia.' Levin (1989) offers *v Sardinii* as the predicted case, but that is not always the case.

Yet, with *na Kube* dominant, there are still instances of *v Kube* that unambiguously, non-metonymically refer to the land itself. One such example is demonstrated below in (42).

(42) *Voprosy   Stalin   zadaval   po delu: ... "Imejutsja   li*
      question.pl.NOM Stalin.NOM assign.3.sg.PST on matter: ... have.3.sg.PRS.RFL Q
      v Kube *amerikanskie vojska?"*
      in Cuba american.pl   troops.NOM
      'Questions Stalin asked regarding the matter: ... "Are there American troops **in Cuba**?"'   (Russian National Corpus)

Example (42) unambiguously refers to the territory of Cuba and not any sort of metonymic

abstraction we observed in earlier examples. Like the Napoleon examples (40) and (41), where *na Rossiju* 'on Russia' was unambigously metonymically eventive and *v Rossiju* 'in Russia' was not, *v Kube* 'in Cuba' in example (42) refers similarly only to the territory.

Nonetheless, the *v* as metonymic analysis does not mean that *na Kube* (lit.) 'on Cuba' precludes non-metonymic meanings. Example (43) demonstrates a case where *na* is used non-metonymically, referring spatially to Cuba.

(43) *Otdykh **na Kube**, v luchshikh sanatorijakh   Soyuza,   lechenije   v*
rest   **on Cuba** in best   sanatoriums.PRP Union.GEN treatment.NOM in
luchshikh gospitaljakh...
best   hospitals.PRP
'Vacation **in Cuba**, in the best sanatoriums of the Union, treatment in the best

hospitals...'   (Russian National Corpus)

However, a metonymic reading is also available in example (44), which is impossible with *v*. Only with *na* can a more abstract sense of an object's environment be gleaned.

(44) *Voobshje ekonomika   - eto samaja tabuirovannaja tema   **na Kube***
indeed   economy.NOM - this most   taboo   topic.NOM **on Kuba**
'Indeed, the economy is the most taboo topic in Cuba.' (Russian National Corpus)

In example (44), na Kube refers to within Cuban society, abstracted away from Cuba as a space. The place, Cuba, stands in for the people among whom the economy is a taboo topic — the economy cannot be taboo to a landmass.

Therefore, the *v/na* metonymic distinction can be seen in a non-ideological, yet nonetheless geopolitical, context of Cuba. When *na* is used, metonymic readings are available. That is not necessarily the case for *v*.

3.4   Expanding to Ukraine

Now that we have a good understanding of the Russian topological prepositions *v* and *na*, we will zero in on one case where the preposition has taken on strong ideological connotations.

The construction *v Ukraine* "in Ukraine" is strongly associated with anti-Kremlin sentiments, while *na Ukraine* is strongly associated with pro-Kremlin sentiments (Devlin 2016).

The Russian National Corpus demonstrates a fairly substantial gap between *na Ukraine* and *v Ukraine*: 1,728 texts with 3,382 samples for *na*, and 250 texts with 493 samples for *v*. Given the historical dominance of *na Ukraine* until the late 1990s, this is not unexpected (Krivoruchko 2008).

I propose that the spatial usage of *na Ukraine* more strongly evokes the metonymic perception due to the existence of *v Ukraine* as a contrast. When *na Ukraine* was the only option, no such strongly metonymic reading was available. The push of *v Ukraine* by Ukrainian language nationalists drew on analogies to Western nations that use *v*. Therefore, *na Ukraine* became marked as more strongly metonymic, representing Ukraine as an abstraction away from its post-Soviet, independent national status and the explicit territory it occupies.

Yet how does this metonymic component generate such strong ideological readings? This will be further addressed in chapter 4.

Chapter 4

Expressive dimensions of *v* and *na*: implications for Ukraine

4.1 Key term: expressives

In the previous chapter, I introduced the current literature on spatial semantics in Russian, focusing on the metonymic approach that Kalyuga (2020) uses to describe the semantics of *v* and *na*. In this chapter, I extend that metonymic analysis to the case of *v/na Ukraine*, and apply the metonymic framework to analyze the expressive associations with each constructions.

Let us first begin by defining expressives. Per Potts (2007), expressives contribute some component of meaning that is independent from the descriptive content. Prototypical expressives include pejoratives (slurs and less severe insults like "that bastard") and some attributive adjectives (e.g. "the *damn* X"). Potts (2007) identifies expressives as typically encoding the speaker's attitude or emotional state. Additionally, expressives are difficult to paraphrase descriptively, a trait that he calls "descriptive ineffability" (Potts 2007). For example, the expressive "that bastard" might be used affectionately in addition to the most accessible meaning of some unlikeable person (Potts 2007). (While all meaning is opaque

to some degree, expressives are especially challenging to paraphrase in entirely descriptive terms (Elbourne 2011).)

At a baseline, we can therefore say that expressives tend to encode a speaker's attitude or emotional state that is separate from the descriptive meaning from the utterance.

4.2   Previous literature on the politics of prepositions: Krivoruchko (2008)

The most comprehensive secondary source analyzing the *v/na Ukraine* phenomenon is a pre-war, pre-Crimean annexation article: "Prepositional wars: when ideology defines preposition" (Krivoruchko 2008).[1]

Krivoruchko (2008) argues that by the time of writing, *v* and *na* are no longer stylistically unmarked ways of referring to Ukraine, and have become strongly associated with specific sociocultural identities. This conclusion has been corroborated by Devlin (2016), who argues that *v Ukraine* and *na Ukraine* are used to politically position oneself as closer to the Kremlin in terms of sociocultural stances (*na Ukraine*) or further away (*v Ukraine*). We will now outline Krivoruchko (2008)'s argument below.

Na Ukraine was, in Russian, the historically unmarked way to refer to Ukraine, analogous to the unmarked way an English speaker might say an event happened "*in* France" or "*in* Germany." This construction was generally treated as an exception in 20th-century textbooks, and textbooks argued *na* was applied because Ukraine could have been considered an administrative unit of the Soviet Union (Krivoruchko 2008).

Krivoruchko (2008) argues that the most common folk etymology that Russian speakers attribute to the *na Ukraine* construction comes from the Russian word *okraina* "outskirts,

---

[1]Much of the literature on this topic is inaccessible for various geopolitical reasons, and multiple of my requests for Russian-language sources from the Yale library have been unsuccessful. Therefore, this chapter is somewhat limited in scope.

borderlands," which comes from the root *kraj* "edge." The corresponding locative preposition to *okraina* is *na*, so therefore, *Ukraina* "Ukraine," supposedly derived from *okraina*, must take *na* as well. This corresponds to the metalinguistic intuition that many Russian speakers have, as this is the etymology cited when describing an aversion to using *na* for Ukraine.

Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the subsequent de-Russification/Ukrainization of Ukraine, Krivoruchko (2008) argues the *na Ukraine* construction began to be more scrutinized by Ukrainian nationalists, who argued that if other Western independent nations take *v*, why not Ukraine?

Krivoruchko (2008) further argues that the ubiquity of the Russian etymology was unacceptable to Ukrainian nationalists in the 1990s that sought to break ties from the imperial and Soviet-era notions of Ukraine as a peripheral borderland of the Russian imperial core. Additionally, Ukrainization involved a fundamental distancing of all things Russian, as Russian linguistic dominance was seen as a threat to national sovereignty. This is an extension of linguistic purism, which is the perception that a language declines, or becomes impure, from foreign borrowings (Yavorska 2010). In this case, Russian-language lexical items and etymologies are considered to be influencing a potentially "pure" Ukrainian. A secondary, Ukrainian-centric folk etymology was presented as follows:

> (1) identification of root morpheme with the root of Ukr. verb *krajaty* "to cut (imperf. aspect)", (2) identification of the prefix *u/v* with the prefix of the verb *vkrajaty* "cut off, set aside (perf. aspect)". In this case, *Ukra�̈na* = "(a territory) cut off", the latter being variously interpreted as "(the territory) that the Ukrainian people cut off/chose for itself", "feudal principality", etc. (Krivoruchko 2008:199)

This interpretation of Ukraine as a willingly "cut off" territory was to justify a policy-level, top-down push for the use of *v* in official communications (Krivoruchko 2008). Thus, *v Ukraine* became the accepted and politically correct construction in 1990s Ukraine.

However, prior to the post-Soviet independence push, there was a historical precedent

for using *na* in Ukrainian, not just Russian. The default, unmarked version of referring to Ukraine in the 19th and 20th centuries was *na Ukraïni*, and was used in classic Ukrainian poetry and literature with no sociopolitical implications.

From Krivoruchko (2008), it is thus clear that neither *v* nor *na* carried sociopolitical implications until the fall of the Soviet Union and the push for Ukrainian sovereignty. *Na* was the unmarked default in both Russian and Ukrainian.

Responses vary on the enforcement of the *v Ukraine* construction. It is banned as a topic in online grammar forums, indicating its ubiquity and contentiousness in the internet age. Krivoruchko (2008) critiques a prescriptivist stance sometimes cited in Russia, which posits that it does not matter what speakers of other languages or inhabitants of other countries think of what is said in Russian: in Russian it is simply said as *na Ukraine*, and Estonia's Tallinn is spelled Tallin, etc. Krivoruchko (2008) observes the presuppositions of the argument rely on Russian as undeviating and not subject to regional change despite its status as a lingua franca across Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

Another possible reason for opposition to *v Ukraine* that Krivoruchko (2008) describes is the perception of such seemingly small linguistic change to be the product of Western political correctness. Proactive use of *na Ukraine*, therefore, can signal not just feeling that using *na* is traditional and reasonable, but also that using *na* is anti-Western.

This is not to say that Krivoruchko (2008) absolves Ukrainian nationalists of linguistic obfuscation. Ukrainization efforts featured pseudoscientific efforts to demonstrate the antiquity of Ukrainian, falsely presenting Ukrainian as the original Indo-European language from which all other Indo-European languages are derived, or to be the language spoken by Jesus in ancient times (Krivoruchko 2008).

Most notable is that this article was written in 2008, prior to the 2013 Euromaidan protests, the 2014 annexation of Crimea, or the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine. Krivoruchko (2008) states that although there are political stances associated with each of these constructions, political representatives of each of those stances will sometimes use the non-

corresponding construction without much fanfare, or even interchangeably. For example, President Vladimir Putin of Russia used the *v Ukraine* construction in a 2004 speech at the Russian-Ukrainian Conference of the Representatives of Highest Legislative Bodies. The gloss and translation are shown below in example (45).

(45) *My ne khotim, chtoby Rossija ogranichivalas' postavkami na vneshnij*
1.pl NEG want.1.pl that Russia limit.3.sg.RFL supplies.INS on external.m
*rynok tol'ko gaza i nefti, i dumaju, chto i **v Ukraine** nikto*
market only gas.GEN and petrol.GEN and think.1.sg that and **in Ukraine** no.one
ne khochet, chtoby ona tol'ko burjakom torgovala ...
NEG want.3.sg that 3.f.sg only beetroot trade.3.fPST
'We do not want Russia to limit itself to supplying only gas and petrol to the international market, and we think that neither **in Ukraine** does anybody want that it will exclusively trade beetroot...'   (Krivoruchko 2008:204)

And, again in the same speech, he used *na Ukraine*. The relevant passage is glossed and translated in example (46).

(46) *Ja rasschityvaju na zdravyj smysl i dobrozhelatel'noe otnoshenie k tem*
1.sg rely.1.sg on common sense and good.willed relations to those
***na Ukraine**, kto shchitajet russkij jazyk rodnym, kto dumaet na*
on Ukraine who consider.3.sg Russian language native.INS who think.3.sg on
nem i kto khotel by, chtoby i deti jego smogli
3.m.sg.INS and who want.PST.3.sg SBJ that and child.pl 3.sg.m.POS could
pol'zovat'sja etim jazykom.
use.RFL.3.sg this.INS language.INS
'I rely on common sense and on the benign attitude to those **in Ukraine**, who consider Russian their mother tongue, who think in it and who wish that their children would also be able to use this language.'   (Krivoruchko 2008:204)

Though nationalism (and anti-nationalism) and linguistic purism (of either Russian and Ukrainian) do guide the use of either *v/na*, these examples demonstrate that in 2008, a speaker *could* feasibly get away with both without necessarily marking themselves as politically positioned one way or the other — even with speakers in the most partisan social positions, such as the president of Russia.

4.3 Metalinguistic awareness & post-2014 language change: Devlin (2016)

A more recent study, Devlin (2016), conducted a quantitative examination of how preposi-
tional use of *v/na* correlated to political viewpoint. They found that 67.5% of pro-Kremlin
commenters on an online forum preferred *na*, and 75.4% of anti-Kremlin commenters pre-
ferred *v*, indicating a strong correlation.

Although beyond the scope of this paper, it would be useful to examine what the mo-
tivations are for the remaining 32.5% and 24.6% of each respective category. The smaller
percent of political commenters preferring *na* compared to their *v* counterparts is possibly
due to reasons of linguistic purism that Krivoruchko (2008) mentioned, and not due to any
particular political inclination. *V*, however, is more strongly correlated to a political stance,
as justifications for linguistic purism do not apply.

On a metalinguistic level, most Russian speakers are well aware of the ideological contrast
between *v Ukraine* and *na Ukraine*.[2] Devlin (2016) observes a high level of metalinguistic
awareness concerning *v/na*. They present an example of metalinguistic commentary online
of a commenter who encounters a post that is anti-Kremlin in content but uses *na Ukraine*
in its form. Example (47) describes a sign displayed on the Crimean Bridge in Moscow. A
response comment is shown in (48).

(47) **Na Ukraine** — *brat'ja,* *v Kremlje* — *fashisty*
      On Ukraine.prp — brothers.NOM in Kremlin.PRP — fascist.pl.NOM

      '**In Ukraine**, [there are] brothers; in the Kremlin, [there are] fascists.'   (Devlin
      2016:74)

---

[2]This extends even to other Slavic languages: a similar contrast occurs in Polish for referring to both
Ukraine and Belarus: using Polish *v* or *na* similarly carries ideological implications (Krystyna Illakowicz,
p.c., 2024).

(48)   *Khot'*   *by*   *uzhe*   **v Ukraine**   *napisali*
      At.least SBJ already **in Ukraine.prp** write.3.pl.PST

      'Should have at least written **in Ukraine**.'   (Devlin 2016:74)

This particular example is best analyzed through the framework of metalinguistic nega-tion (Horn 1985). Metalinguistic negation is defined as negating not the proposition itself, but the external form of the utterance. For example, someone may refer to having caught two "mongeese." An interlocutor may disagree not with the number of mongooses caught, which is part of the proposition, but rather with the use of the word "mongeese," and say something like, "You didn't trap mongeese, you trapped mongooses."

In the case of example (47), the proposition is clearly anti-Kremlin, as the protesters are calling the Kremlin fascistic. However, the displeased metalinguistic comment in example (48) on the use of *na Ukraine* indicates the sentiment that full solidarity was not exhibited. What is negated is the use of the form *na Ukraine*; just as "mongeese" is unacceptable, so is *na Ukraine*. The awareness of these expressive dimensions indicates that *v* and *na* are *strongly* used to position political identity. More importantly, the choice of *v/na* is seen as an active choice of solidarity or opposition. Devlin (2016) analyzes the use of *na Ukraine* in this case as a failure of solidarity, and of solidarity on Russian, rather than Ukrainian, terms, arguing that *na Ukraine* could be seen as foisted on externally even for a common cause.

4.4   Contemporary distributions of *v/na Ukraine* from state sources and critical sources

In this section, I introduce data from sources with a more overt ideological bent. Using linguistic data from *Radio Svoboda*, a Russian-language newspaper, and from the website of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation, I further demonstrate the strong expressive dimensions of *v/na Ukraine* by comparing the frequency of *v/na Ukraine* in the respective sources, and I continue to extend the metonymic analysis towards more recent data.

Further data from newspapers, most notably Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), known as *Radio Svobodo* 'Radio Liberty' in its Russian-language variety, corroborates the evidence of strong expressive associations of *v Ukraine* with anti-Kremlin sentiment. RFE/RL was founded as an American extension of soft power beyond the Iron Curtain during the Cold War.[3] Therefore, it is clear that RFE/RL, and by extension *Radio Svoboda*, have editorial slants that lean more friendly to the West.

One hundred headlines with their corresponding subheadings (200 headlines and subheadings total) from April 2025 under the Russia-Ukraine War section of the Russian-language version of *Radio Svoboda* were analyzed for presence of either the *v Ukraine* or *na Ukraine* construction. The range of April 4-April 11, 2025 was chosen to maximize recency, especially given the ever-evolving nature of the conflict. The *v Ukraine* construction appears 24 times over the course of 100 articles and subheadings. *Na Ukraine* appears just once, and its context is in a statement given from the Russian Ministry of Justice. The featured segment of the statement is shown in example (49).[4]

(49)   *Vystupal*   *protiv spetsial'noj vojennoj*   *operatsii*   **na Ukraine**.
       speak.out.3.mPST against special.GEN military.GEN operation.GEN **on Ukraine**
       'He spoke out against the special military operation in Ukraine.'

The only use of *na Ukraine* in *Radio Svoboda* being from a quoted Russian state ministry — and not from anything written by the paper itself — is indicative of extremely strong editorial awareness of the expressive gravity of these two prepositions. Although it is possible that writers for the paper may use *na Ukraine* in their daily life, either out of habit or out of choice, the editorial standards of the paper and the critical stance it fundamentally takes towards the Kremlin and the current Russian Federation would make use of *na* in published articles seemingly inconsistent with the values of the publication. This can also be attributed

---

[3]RFE/RL was funded by the U.S. government until 2025, when the Department of Government Efficiency under the second Trump administration suggested funding be cut as an attempt to reduce costs for the U.S. government (Layne and Oliphant 2025).

[4][link][archive]

to the historical reasons described in section 4.2. The *v Ukraine* construction is the official editorial stance of the Ukrainian government, and as a written publication with (likely) a consistent style guide, it is unlikely that they are not aware of the style recommendations of the nation they write about.

We have successfully shown that *na* contributes to a metonymic reading in previous sections. For this specific example, the analysis still stands. The *na Ukraine* construction is ambiguous between a non-metonymic analysis referring to a special operation taking place in Ukraine, on Ukrainian soil, and a metonymic analysis that treats the special operation in Ukraine as its own abstracted event, not just the actual military operations happening on the land, but also including further logistics, including those taking part in Russia. Thus, in *na Ukraine*, the use of *na* gives rise to the reading of Ukraine — the whole — standing in for its military history and logistics — the part. The expressive dimension of pro-Kremlin sentiment can thus be read as arising from this metonymic underpinning, that Ukraine stands in not for itself, but for some subset of abstract, related concepts.

Although it is possible that the Ministry of Justice's choice to use *na Ukraine* was a one-time decision, further investigation into Russian state apparatuses reveals it as deliberate. In section 4.2, we discussed how *na Ukraine* and *v Ukraine* used to not be so strongly marked. This unmarkedness was best exemplified in a 2004 speech of the president of Russia — the head of state of the Russian Federation and probably the most pro-Kremlin you can be — interchangeably using both *v Ukraine* and *na Ukraine*. (Recall examples (45) and (46).) Now, however, given the war, *v Ukraine* is practically unseen in any statement put out by the Russian government. The most dramatic place to investigate this question of *v/na* would be the website of the Russian Ministry of Defense mil.ru, which my browser attempted to warn me about each time I accessed it. Out of a sample of 200 Ukraine-related announcements from 2011-2025, five announcements from the Ministry of Defense use the *v Ukraine* construction. Of the five selected *v Ukraine*-using announcements, one was from 2013, one was from 2014, and three were from 2022. Example (50) was published in March

2022, less than a month after the invasion commenced.[5]

(50)   *Zhiteli   Sahkalina   i   Kuril'skikh ostrovov   peredali   podarki dlja*
        resident.pl sakhalin.GEN and kuril.GEN   island.pl.GEN send.3.plPST gift.pl   for
        *vojennosluzhazhikh uchastvujuschikh v spetsial'noj operatsii   **v Ukraine***
        military.personnel   participating   in special.GEN operation.GEN **in Ukraine**

        'Residents of Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands sent gifts to military personnel partici-

        pating in the special operation **in Ukraine**.'   (Russian Ministry of Defense)

It is crucial to note that both examples (49) and (50) use the euphemism *spetsial'naja (vojennaja) operatsija* 'special (military) operation.' The state does not call it a "war" or an "invasion," both of which are banned terms in the national discourse (Troianovski and Safronova 2022). In example (50), a non-metonymic reading is more plausible, as the event depicted describes how people *pereslali podarki* 'sent gifts' to a specific location, that is the landmass of Ukraine. However, we now encounter the problem that despite a non-metonymic reading, the Russian Ministry of Defense saying *v Ukraine* clearly does not give rise to the anti-Kremlin expressive dimension. This is likely because the metalinguistic world knowledge overrides that linguistic intuition, and is unlike the social media example from (Devlin 2016). (The data have been repeated below in (51) and (52). Example (51) refers to the contents of a protest sign, and example (52) refers to a comment under a post about it.) The commenter in (52) expresses clear dissatisfaction for how the protesters in (52) refer to Ukraine.

(51)   ***Na Ukraine**   — brat'ja,   v Kremlje   — fashisty*
        On Ukraine.prp — brothers.NOM in Kremlin.PRP — fascist.pl.NOM
        '**In Ukraine**, [there are] brothers; in the Kremlin, [there are] fascists.'   (Devlin
        2016:74)

---

[5] [link][archive]

(52)   *Khot'*   *by*   *uzhe*   **v Ukraine**   *napisali*
At.least SBJ already **in Ukraine.prp** write.3.pl.PST

'Should have at least written **in Ukraine**.'   (Devlin 2016:74)

Although it is evident they are both anti-Kremlin, we can return to Devlin (2016)'s interpretation of this conflict of *na Ukraine* representing a failure of solidarity. In the case of the Ministry of Defense, on the other hand, there is no solidarity to be had, and it is not as if some social expectation has been violated.

The small discrepancy between the Ministry of Defense's uses of *v/na Ukraine* and that of *Radio Svoboda*'s use of *v/na Ukraine* is likely due to the scope of the data. That is, the reason the Ministry of Defense seems to occasionally use *v* while *Radio Svoboda* seems to never use *na* is because the data collected from *Radio Svoboda* is exclusively from April 2025. No Ukraine-related announcement from the Ministry of Defense published on their website in 2025 uses the *v Ukraine* construction.

Overall, this section has demonstrated that even including recent data from ideologically inclined sources (the pro-Kremlin Russian Ministry of Defense and the anti-Kremlin newspaper *Radio Svoboda*), the metonymic analysis can partially explain the expressive dimensions arising from the use of either *v Ukraine* or *na Ukraine*. I also show that historical background and world knowledge cannot be overlooked, explaining why even when the Russian Ministry of Defense sometimes uses *v Ukraine* in older posts, the expressive dimensions are not present.

4.5   Towards a link between metonymy and ideology

In this section, we will conclude our discussion of how metonymy can be enmeshed with geopolitics. We will go over some examples of how other countries use metonymy in political speech, but outside of spatial contexts.

The examples given earlier in section 3.3 do not feature such strong levels of metalinguistic

awareness. The examples are repeated here in (53) and (54).

(53) *Voprosy   Stalin   zadaval   po delu: ... "Imejutsja*
      question.pl.NOM Stalin.NOM assign.3.sg.PST on matter.PRP: ... have.3.sg.PRS.RFL
      *li **v Kube** amerikanskie vojska?"*
      Q **in Cuba** american.pl   troops.NOM
      'Questions Stalin asked regarding the matter: ... "Are there American troops **in
      Cuba**?"'   (Russian National Corpus)

(54) *Otdykh **na Kube**, v luchshikh sanatorijakh   Soyuza,   lechenije   v*
      rest   **on Cuba** in best   sanatoriums.PRP Union.GEN treatment in
      luchshikh gospitaljakh...
      best   hospitals
      'Vacation **in Cuba**, in the best sanatoriums of the Union, treatment in the best
      hospitals...'   (Russian National Corpus)

No such expressive connotation or political positionality exists when referring to Cuba with
v or *na*, or a village with *v* or *na*, or Sardinia with *v* or *na.*

The metonymic analysis given in section 3.3 can provide an answer to the question of compositionality in the expressive dimension of *v/na Ukraine.* The construction of *v/na Ukraine* and the ideological associations of each are not entirely idiosyncratic, as demonstrated in the same section.

The link between metonymy and nationalism is not new. Salamurović (2020) analyzes North Macedonian, Montenegrin, and German political speeches to determine how political discourse uses metonymy. A systematized PLACE-FOR-X metonymy annotation system was pulled from Markert and Nissim (2008). Salamurović (2020) concludes that in West Balkan discourse, the name of the nation (North Macedonia, Montenegro) is most often used as a metonym for people and events to present a sense of collective identification between the speaker, who represents the institution, and the audience, representing a collective people. German state discourse, on the other hand, uses "Europe" as a metonym instead. Russian-language discourse regarding Ukraine may also similarly be served by a systematic search of PLACE-FOR-X metonymies, more thoroughly examining the distribution of these metonymies

in *v/na* contexts.

In this chapter, I have shown how metonymy interrelates with the expressive dimensions of *v Ukraine* and *na Ukraine*. In section 4.2, I outlined the origin of both the *v Ukraine* and *na Ukraine* constructions and their respective perceptions in Ukraine. In section 4.3, I discussed how metalinguistic awareness of the expressive dimensions manifests in online discourse. I then connected it to contemporary uses of *v Ukraine* and *na Ukraine* by sources with differing ideological stances, and explained how although metonymy can partially explain the expressive dimensions (and how it does in other national contexts), world knowledge can override the predicted reading.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

This thesis challenged a key tenet of linguistic arbitrariness and proposed that there is something compositional to the expressive dimension of *v/na Ukraine*. It asked the question, is there something about the semantics of *v* and *na* that can explain the expressive dimension of the *v Ukraine* and *na Ukraine* constructions? Using evidence from spatial semantics models and applying them to non-ideological contexts, including both proper noun landmasses and common nouns, I suggested that when both *v* and *na* are available as alternations, the use of *na* generates a metonymic whole-for-part reading of the prepositional object. In the case of *v/na Ukraine*, the expressive dimensions arise from the metonymic abstraction of Ukraine to related, but non-nation, concepts. Although metonymy provided part of a solution, it is not fully comprehensive, particularly in cases where world knowledge clearly indicates that the source of the utterance does not share the expected politics that the expressive dimension of *v/na Ukraine* would indicate. This is best exemplified in the case of the Russian Ministry of Defense (rarely) using *v Ukraine* constructions without compromising its status as part of the Russian government. Ultimately, what is most crucial to note is that the expressive dimension does not arise exclusively from the topology of Ukraine, and that topological semantics alone cannot account for this expressive alternation.

This question of semantics and politics is not easy, and my thesis has opened up but

one possible avenue for exploration of it through metonymy. My analysis focused exclusively on Russian-language data because that is a heritage language for which I (tend to) have native-like intuitions and a language where I am aware of the cultural discourse. However, an analysis of Ukrainian would be equally appropriate to determine if there is a similar expressive dimension. Outside of the domain of spatial semantics, an analysis of possible expressive dimensions of English "*the* Ukraine" compared to "Ukraine" may also be fruitful.

Furthermore, different methodologies may help us refine the analysis. I excluded elicitation as a possible methodology due to the strong metalinguistic awareness surrounding this issue, and I instead chose to use corpora, examples from secondary literature, and data from written primary sources. However, an experimental approach that successfully controlled for metalinguistic awareness may provide further answers. A historical semantics approach could also trace how the expressive dimensions of *v/na Ukraine* have evolved. My thesis touched on this in chapter 4 and concluded that in 2025 it is much more strongly expressive than in 2004, but a more thorough analysis could outline what specific events, if any, triggered greater metalinguistic awareness and stronger expressive dimensions.

Finally, a deeper dive into regions within Russia and Ukraine would illuminate further elements of the analysis. The scope of this analysis referred exclusively to *v/na Ukraine*, but an analysis of the language used to refer to the Donbas, a region in eastern Ukraine that also appears to be subject to the *v/na* alternation, could show whether that also exhibits similar expressive dimensions to *v/na Ukraine.*

References

Bowerman, Melissa and Soonja Choi. 2001. Shaping meanings for language: universal and language-specific in the acquisition of spatial semantic categories. In Melissa Bowerman and Stephen Levinson (eds.), *Language Acquisition and Conceptual Development*, 475–511. Cambridge University Press, 1st edn. doi:10.1017/CBO9780511620669.018. URL `https://www.cambridge.org/core/product/identifier/CBO9780511620669A027/type/book_part`.

Brugman, Claudia and George Lakoff. 1988. Cognitive Topology and Lexical Networks. In *Lexical Ambiguity Resolution*, 477–508. Elsevier. doi:10.1016/B978-0-08-051013-2.50022-7. URL `https://linkinghub.elsevier.com/retrieve/pii/B9780080510132500227`.

Cienki, Alan. 1995. The Semantics of Possessive and Spatial Constructions in Russian and Bulgarian: A Comparative Analysis in Cognitive Grammar. *The Slavic and East European Journal* 39(1). 73–114. doi:10.2307/308693. URL `https://www.jstor.org/stable/308693`. Publisher: American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages.

Cienki, Alan J. 1989. *Spatial Cognition and the Semantics of Prepositions in English, Polish and Russian* (Slavistische Beitraege Series v.237). Frankfurt a.M: Peter Lang GmbH, Internationaler Verlag der Wissenschaften, 1st edn.

Devlin, Anne Marie. 2016. Positioning the Political Self and Other: Lexical and Syntactic Devices Employed to Position the Other in Russian Online Political Forums. *International Journal of Russian Studies* 5(1). 61–79.

Elbourne, Paul. 2011. *Meaning: A Slim Guide to Semantics*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.

Grice, H.P. 1975. Logic and Conversation. In Jerry L. Morgan and Peter Cole (eds.), *Syntax and Semantics 3: Speech Arts*, vol. 3, 41–58. New York San Francisco London: Academic press, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Herskovits, Annette. 1986. *Language and spatial cognition: an interdisciplinary study of the prepositions in English*, Studies in natural language processing. Cambridge [Cambridgeshire] ; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Horn, Laurence. 1984. Toward a new taxonomy for pragmatic inference: Q-based and R-based implicature .

Horn, Laurence R. 1985. Metalinguistic Negation and Pragmatic Ambiguity. *Language* 61(1). 121–174. doi:10.2307/413423. URL `https://www.jstor.org/stable/413423`. Publisher:

Linguistic Society of America.

Jackendoff, Ray and Barbara Landau. 1991. Spatial language and spatial cognition. *Bridges between Psychology and Linguistics: A Swarthmore Festschrift for Lila Gleitman* .

Kalyuga, Marika. 2020. *Russian Prepositional Phrases: A Cognitive Linguistic Approach*. Singapore: Springer Singapore. doi:10.1007/978-981-15-5216-8. URL `http://link.springer.com/10.1007/978-981-15-5216-8`.

Krivoruchko, Julia G. 2008. Prepositional wars: When ideology defines preposition. In Dennis Kurzon and Silvia Adler (eds.), *Typological Studies in Language*, vol. 74, 191–208. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company. doi:10.1075/tsl.74.10kri. URL `https://benjamins.com/catalog/tsl.74.10kri`.

Kustova, Galina. 2001. Semantic Networks and Semantic Processes: The Case of the Russian preposition NA. *Glossos* 1.

Lakoff, George and Mark Leonard Johnson. 1980. *Metaphors we live by*. Chicago London: University of Chicago press.

Layne, Nathan and James Oliphant. 2025. Voice of America staff put on leave, Trump ally says agency 'not salvageable'. *Reuters* URL `https://www.reuters.com/business/media-telecom/trump-signs-order-gut-voice-america-other-agencies-2025-03-15/`.

Levin, Maurice I. 1989. Expressing Spatial Relationships in Russian: The Prepositions B and Ha. *Russian Language Journal /* 43(145/146). 3–11. URL `https://www.jstor.org/stable/43669603`. Publisher: American Councils for International Education ACTR / ACCELS.

Markert, Katja and Malvina Nissim. 2008. Metonymic proper names: A corpus-based account. In Anatol Stefanowitsch and Stefan Th. Gries (eds.), *Corpus-Based Approaches to Metaphor and Metonymy*, 152–174. De Gruyter Mouton. doi:10.1515/9783110199895.152. URL `https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.1515/9783110199895.152/html`.

Mukharlyamova, Liliya Rashidovna, Leysan Khabirovna Shayakhmetova and Assiya Sulkarnayeva. 2020. Prepositions Representing Space in English And Russian Proverbs. *Journal of Research in Applied Linguistics* 11(Proceedings of the 7th International Conference on Applied Linguistics Issues (ALI 2020), Saint Petersburg, 13-14 June 2020). 98–105. doi:10.22055/rals.2020.16290. URL `https://rals.scu.ac.ir/article_16290.html`. Publisher: Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz.

Munnich, Edward, Barbara Landau and Barbara Anne Dosher. 2001. Spatial language and spatial representation: a cross-linguistic comparison. *Cognition* 81(3). 171–208. doi:10.1016/S0010-0277(01)00127-5. URL `https://linkinghub.elsevier.com/retrieve/pii/S0010027701001275`.

Potts, Christopher. 2007. The expressive dimension. *Theoretical Linguistics* 33(2). 165–198. doi:10.1515/TL.2007.011. URL `https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.1515/TL.2007.011/html`.

Retz-Schmidt, Gudula. 1988. Various Views on Spatial Prepositions. *AI Magazine* 9(2).

95–95. doi:10.1609/aimag.v9i2.678. URL `https://ojs.aaai.org/aimagazine/index.php/aimagazine/article/view/678`. Number: 2.

Salamurović, Aleksandra. 2020. Metonymy and the conceptualisation of nation in political discourse. *Yearbook of the German Cognitive Linguistics Association* 8(1). 181–196. doi:10.1515/gcla-2020-0011. URL `https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.1515/gcla-2020-0011/html`.

Shmatova, Natalia. 2011. *Typological description of Russian space prepositions and and their Scandinavian equivalents.* Ph.D., The Institute for Linguistic Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow.

Talmy, Leonard. 2000. *Toward a Cognitive Semantics, Volume 2: Typology and Process in Concept Structuring.* The MIT Press. doi:10.7551/mitpress/6848.001.0001. URL `https://direct.mit.edu/books/monograph/2801/Toward-a-Cognitive-Semantics-Volume-2Typology-and`.

Troianovski, Anton and Valeriya Safronova. 2022. Russia Takes Censorship to New Extremes, Stifling War Coverage. *The New York Times* URL `https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/04/world/europe/russia-censorship-media-crackdown.html`.

Vandeloise, Claude. 1991. *Spatial prepositions: a case study from French.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Yavorska, Galina. 2010. The impact of ideologies on the standardization of modern Ukrainian 2010(201). 163–197. doi:10.1515/ijsl.2010.008. URL `https://www.degruyterbrill.com/document/doi/10.1515/ijsl.2010.008/html`. Publisher: De Gruyter Mouton Section: International Journal of the Sociology of Language.

Zwarts, Joost. 2017. Spatial semantics: Modeling the meaning of prepositions. *Language and Linguistics Compass* 11(5). e12241. doi:10.1111/lnc3.12241. URL `https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/lnc3.12241`. _eprint: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/lnc3.12241.

Šarić, Ljiljana. 2014. *Spatial Concepts in Slavic: A Cognitive Linguistic Study of Prepositions and Cases.* Harrassowitz, O, 1st edn. doi:10.2307/j.ctvc16n88. URL `http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/j.ctvc16n88`.