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## «В каком контексте?»: A Context-Based Approach to Teaching Verbs of Motion

Irina Six

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**«В каком контексте?»:  
A Context-Based Approach to Teaching Verbs of Motion**

**IRINA SIX**

**1. Introduction**

Anyone who has studied or taught Russian using the textbook *В пути*, authored by Olga Kagan, Frank Miller, and Ganna Kudyma, is probably familiar with the following thought-provoking prompt: *В каком контексте?* 'Think of a situation when you could say': *Ты звонила домой сегодня? – Ты позвонила домой сегодня?* 'Did you call [imperfective] home today? – Did you call [perfective] home today?' or *Они не приходили. – Они не пришли.* 'They did not come [imperfective]. – They did not come [perfective]' (Kagan, Miller and Kudyma 2006, 79). This is one of the rare examples of assignments where Russian as a Second Language (RL2) students are asked to explicitly describe the context of an element of Russian speech. While this is a typical task for native Russian speakers (such assignments are routinely used in Russian middle school textbooks), RL2 learners are seldom prompted to provide an explicit description of the context in which the Russian utterance occurs and usually find this task challenging.

This article builds on the context approach to teaching verbal aspect in *В пути* and expands upon it to include the introduction of verbs of motion (VoM) at the novice level. Developed for beginning learners of Russian, the context-based approach first teaches the different contexts in which the verbs of motion occur and only then introduces the verb forms. It also guides the students on how to select the appropriate Russian equivalent of the English language generic verbs GO and COME through simple rules (the NO GO rule, the ABC principle). Contrary to the implicit strategy, which suggests that the students will eventually acquire the feel for context after multiple exposures to various language examples, the context-based approach proposes explicit instruction about the basic contextual situations from the very beginning and a different sequence in the instruction about

tenses. The suggested method has yet to find followers and supporters; however, the empirical observations of its results suggest significant progress in VoM retention and production.

## **2. Theoretical issues and terminology**

There is an apparent paradox in teaching VoM to native and non-native Russian learners. Native Russian speakers do not see verbs of motion as a challenge. They experience no more difficulties with them than with other verbs in first language acquisition (Gagarina 2009, 464). They never consider multidirectional and unidirectional meanings and do not see VoM aspect pairs as peculiar. Rather, native speakers see these pairs as a core part of the verbal system and in full conformity with the general principles of Russian morphology. This paradox has been widely discussed in linguistic studies. Some scholars suggest that there appear to be some “procedural rules” (Tseitlin 2015) for such categories as verbal aspect and VoM, which Russian native speakers acquire at an early age. Unfortunately, most of these rules are not included in Russian language textbooks.

The suggested context-based approach to teaching Russian VoM to English-speaking learners is not intended to contradict any theoretical findings or the ample discussion about these verbs. It does not add any new theoretical approach that needs to be explained to students. Rather, it is about what should be excluded from the explanation to beginners. The proposed method looks for the bare minimum in terminology paired with visuals and a meticulous explanation of context. With the purpose of simplifying the conceptual presentation and terminology, the explanations are shortened to three oppositions: past versus present tense, directional versus non-directional stem, and ongoing single directed versus all other cases motions.

### ***2.1. Context: past tense versus present tense***

Most of the confusion in teaching VoM comes from different logic implied in the past-tense and present-tense forms. Since Russian present-tense forms are only imperfective, the two tenses are semantically dissimilar. Coupled with the challenge of directedness versus non-directedness, switching tenses in VoM remains one of the most challenging tasks for RL2 learners. However, changing the sequence in presentation of tenses

and building on the general specifics of Russian tenses may help in overcoming some difficulties.

Contrary to the methodology used in most RL2 textbooks, which starts with imperfective unidirectional and multidirectional VoM in the present tense, the context-based approach advocates starting with the past tense. For the initial input, it proposes a storytelling of a narrative about a completed round trip within the sequence of events with parallel drawing of pictograms.

In the case of VoM, the differences between present- and past-tense forms are crucial. The context-based approach therefore starts with assignments on separation of the VoM in the context of the past tense (Context Situation 1) and the present tense (Context Situations 2 and 3).

## ***2.2. Stem: directional versus non-directional***

The suggested approach recommends focusing students' attention on VoM differentiation based on two different stems for the two different concepts. Described in detail in a recent publication by Zalizniak (2017, 6, 12–14), the two stems are also dissimilar in prefixation and word-formation models. For the methodology, it is important that a directional stem implies a vector whereas all VoM with non-directional stems (regardless of the wide range of their meanings) are “essentially static”, as Launer (1987) observed, and do not foresee subject displacement. Focusing on “stem” and “stem semantics” allows for grouping together prefixed and non-prefixed verbs, such as *пошёл, шёл, пришёл* versus *ходил, сходил*.

## ***2.3. Motion: single direction versus all other cases***

Russian motion verbs are presented as uni- and multidirectional in most RSL textbooks without utilizing Isachenko's (1960) division of VoM into two categories: (1) ongoing motion in a single direction and (2) all other cases. Isachenko's categories highlight the semantics of the representation of motion in Russian. The division of VoM into these categories can provide students with a simple principle for the correct stem choice in present tense forms: For single ongoing motion events, utilize a DIRECTIONAL stem. For all other meanings, use a NON-DIRECTIONAL stem. Application of this rule takes away the notorious distinction into prefixed and unprefixed VoM and simplifies the choice of verb form regardless of prefixation: *иду* versus *вхожу, прихожу, хожу, перехожу*.

In the context of present tense, events in Russian are perceived as activities in progress observed simultaneously with the moment of speech (*Я читаю книгу сейчас*, 'I am *reading* a book now'), and also in a broader context with no reference to the moment of speech (*Он хорошо говорит, но не читает по-русски*, 'He speaks well, but doesn't *read* Russian'). Relevant to all Russian verbs in general, this distinction is crucial in the case of VoM. Observable motions in progress may be coded with VoM of both stems (*А я иду, шагаю по Москве*, 'And I am *walking*, marching across Moscow.' *Я хожу по комнате*, 'I am *walking* around the room). Among non-observable events, repeated events may also be coded by VoM of both stems and an indicator of habituality (*Каждый день я иду на работу. Каждый день я хожу на работу*, 'Every day I *go* to work'). For a broader context (abilities, skills, action in general) with no reference to a specified moment, only verbs with NON-DIRECTIONAL stems are used (*Ребёнок уже ходит*, 'The child is already *walking*.' *Сюда ходит автобус, а не трамвай*, 'The bus *comes* here, but not the tram.' *Солнце всходит на востоке, а заходит на западе*, 'The sun *comes up* in the East, and *goes down* in the West.' *Эта газета больше не выходит*, 'This newspaper is no longer *in print/comes out*.').

### 3. Suggested methodology

In accounting for order to mediate the basic oppositions and dissimilarities discussed above, this article suggests the following sequence in teaching VoM:

#### **3.1. Step 1: Looking at motion through Russian eyes (via Context Situations)**

Teaching VoM at the novice level starts with highlighting the importance of being specific in motion description in Russian. The three major Context Situations are then presented. The suggested input (in Exercise 1A) urges students to apply the tactics of looking at a motion event through Russian eyes. Students begin by learning to separate motion events that have already happened (described in Russian in the past tense) from events that happen habitually or are currently happening (described in the present tense). Among motions in the present tense, students are taught to distinguish single directed ongoing motions from all other cases. These divisions create three major contextual situations:

(1) Context Situation 1. Motion event in the past-tense context: a

description of the round trip within the sequence of events.

- (2) Context Situation 2. Motion in the present-tense context: ongoing in a single direction.
- (3) Context Situation 3. Motion in the present-tense context: all other cases.

The first teaching task (Exercise 1) draws the English speakers' attention to nuances that English language lacks. In Exercise 1A, students examine the three Context Situations in which the verbs of motion occur. In Exercise 1B, students assign a Context Situation number to English phrases, a simple but valuable task that raises students' awareness of the differences between the Context Situations and prevents mistakes in translation of motion verbs (especially, GO and COME) into Russian.

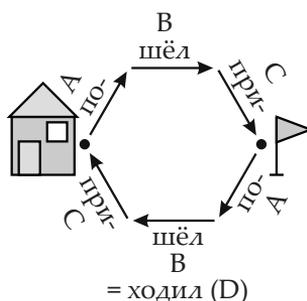
### **3.2. Step 2: Introducing VoM in the past tense (via ABC story)**

The input of actual VoM starts with a narrative in the past tense (Context Situation 1). The round-trip story presented to students includes VoM (perfective and imperfective, with directional and non-directional stems) introduced in contextual distinctions via storytelling coupled with a step-by-step drawing of pictograms on the board. Other visualization techniques are possible; however, simple methods of input seem to work best for displaying contextual differences in the classroom. At the novice level, we suggest inputting perfective and imperfective forms without specifying their aspect, but implying visualization and storytelling for explanation of their semantic differences in the past forms, as in the ABC story in Exercise 2.

The first two stories (presented as childlike narratives in Exercises 2 and 7) are designed to visualize Russian-language equivalents related to the English-language concepts of the verbs GO and COME. More importantly, these stories visually display the difference between verbs with non-directional stems (A, B, and C verbs) and directional verbs (D verb). Depending on the language skills of the audience, the stories can be altered, spiced up with or stripped of words and details, but the stories should never lose the three legs of the route: A verbs (*пошёл, поехал*) signifying the action's inception, B verbs (*шёл, ехал*) signifying the action in progress, and C verbs (*пришёл, приехал*) signifying the arrival. The round-trip story is summarized with the D verb signifying an EVENT OR ACTIVITY (*ходил,*

ездил). The sample round-trip story presented in Exercise 2 follows the storyline of a Russian Winnie-the-Pooh cartoon, which might be briefly shown to students for informational purposes. In parallel to telling (or reading) the story, the step-by-step drawings that support the storyline should be completed as presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1.



It is equally important to invest time into honing the skill of correctly rendering go into Russian through the sequence presented in Exercises 3-5, urging students to analyze and memorize English equivalents to the ABC story phrases.

Contextual presentation of VoM via storytelling with the A-B-C backbone allows students to create their own retrospective mini-stories shortly after the initial introduction of VoM. Exercise 6 provides verb scaffolding to present the students with an opportunity to create their own simple stories.

The next step introduces a second storytelling activity built on the same ABC principle and filled in with another set of VoM that are also translatable as GO and COME (Exercise 7). Traditionally in RL2 textbooks, the difference between *идти/ходить* and *ехать/ездить* is portrayed as the distinction “on foot” versus “by vehicle”; however the semantic analysis of Koshelev (1999) suggests that it is the nature of the subject’s contact with the road surface that plays the decisive role in the verb meanings. The characteristic features relevant to the concept of *ехать* are (a) UNINTERRUPTED indirect contact with the road surface (*непрерывно опираясь*), (b) SOLID road surface (*на твёрдую поверхность*), and (c) UTILIZATION OF A SUPPORTING BASE that provides a permanent direct contact with the ground

(с фиксированной опорной областью). These characteristics (and not the traditionally emphasized means of transportation per se) permit the use of *ехать* in the example *Мальчик едет с горки на спине/ногах*, ‘The boy goes down the hill on his spine/legs’, even though no means of transportation is used, while precluding *Колесо едет*, ‘The wheel is going’, as no permanent fixed unmovable support secures the wheel’s contact with the road (Koshelev 1999, 44–49). For the purpose of RL2 teaching, the traditional distinction “on foot” versus “by transport” might be recast as “by itself, no supporting base” versus “utilizing a supporting base” for easier lexicalization of phrases with direct and figurative meaning, such as *Она ездит на нём всю жизнь*, ‘She has been using him all her life’. *Ты можешь ездить на моей*, ‘You can use my car’.

The sample story presented in Exercise 7 is an adaptation of a song, “*Мы едем, едем, едем*, ‘We are going, going, going’” featured in a Russian cartoon, which is recommended for brief familiarization. The input is focused on the storytelling (text) based on song lyrics and has been purposely simplified for the novice level. Instructors may make as many changes to the sample stories as they wish as long as they preserve the “ABC equals D” formula and the relevant VoM (as in Exercise 8).

For visualizing the second story, the same sequence of exercises resulting in a similar final drawing and the similar formula of “going by vehicle” is recommended (Exercises 8–11; Figures 4 and 5). The summary chart “The Six Ways to Go” (Exercise 12) brings together all six possibilities for translating the verb go as exemplified by the two stories, giving consideration to the “vehicle” versus “no vehicle” opposition.

Additionally, teaching VoM through storytelling utilizing the “ABC equals D” formula and the pictograms contributes to contextualizing aspectual differences untranslatable into English. In the ABC stories, A verbs (*пошёл, поехал*) and C verbs (*пришёл, приехал*) exemplify the basic aspectual notion of specific single or sequential events of perfective verbs. In the pictograms, A verbs are depicted as vectors starting from a point, while C verbs are depicted as vectors ending at a point to accentuate their starting and ending connotations and the nature of these verbs as events. B verbs (*шёл, ехал*) embody the fundamental aspectual notion of progression of imperfect verbs

and are depicted as vectors only (with no starting or ending points). Furthermore, both sample texts contain context indicators mandatory for verbs of progression (Soboleva 2014, 169–70), such as the need for simultaneous action for single directed B verbs: *Пух шёл домой и думал о Кролике*, 'Рооh was walking home and thinking about Rabbit'. *Дети ехали и пели* 'The children rode and sang.' D verbs (*ходил, ездил*) exemplify the aspectual notion of general validity of imperfect verbs. They are not depicted as vectors but are rather applied to a picture summarizing all steps of the round trip (Figure 3 and 5).

### 3.3. Step 3: Contextualizing single directional motion in the present tense (via B verbs)

Due to the specifics of Russian aspect, the ABC story (Context Situation 1) is not entirely transferable into the present tense: A verbs (*пошёл*) do not exist in the present, while C verbs (*пришёл*) function only in the context of repetitions (*Он часто приходит к нам в гости*, 'He often comes to visit us'). On the other hand, B verbs (*шёл*) and D verbs (*ходил*) may serve as helpful tools in bridging the past and present tenses.

Context Situation 2 describes either a speaker's current motion for a certain goal or an ongoing motion observed by a speaker in the moment of speech, which may or may not be indicated by *сейчас*, 'now' (*Она идёт по улице*, 'She is walking down the street'). Since goal-based orientation is more fundamental for *идти*-type verbs than destination-based orientation (Maisak and Rakhilina 1999), the students' task prioritizes usage of *идти* with the following infinitives signifying goals (*Спокойной ночи! Я иду спать*, 'Good night, I am going to bed'). *Идите обедать!*, 'Go eat!'). Emphasizing goal orientation connotation permits for easier explanation of typically disregarded cases, such as *Корабль идёт в порт*, 'The boat is heading into port' and *Самолёт идёт на посадку*, 'The plane is coming in for a landing' (Maisak and Rakhilina 1999). Emphasizing current duration connotation allows for practicing the usage of *идти* to express ONGOINGNESS at large (*Фильм начался? – Да, фильм уже идёт*, 'Has the film started? –Yes, it's already going/playing').

Context Situation 2 implies the SOLITARY usage of B verbs in the present tense (VoM with directional stems without prefixes, like *идём* and *едём*), including the situations when English uses COME (Morozov 1999, 85; Paducheva 2002, 121–22), compare: *Обед готов! – Иду!* 'Lunch

is ready! – *Coming!*; *Автобус идёт. Наконец-то!* – ‘Here comes the bus. Finally!’ To avoid possible mistranslations of COME in student exercises, the following input with reference to the ABC story proved helpful: C verbs (*пришёл, приехал*) describe arrival to a final destination, an event, depicted in pictograms as a vector’s target point (Figures 1). In the context of the present tense, C verbs do not belong to Context Situation 2, which indicates ongoingness.

Regarding repetition, however, C verbs are applicable to Context Situation 3, and therefore acquire a non-directional stem (*Каждый понедельник Пух приходит в гости*. ‘Every Monday Pooh comes for a visit’).

It is important to note to students that Context Situation 2 describes ongoing motions simultaneous with the moment of speech (observable) and also directed goal-oriented motions taking place in other time period (non-observable). In the latter case, time indicators will contextualize the meaning as either INTENTION (*Завтра я иду на концерт*. ‘I am going to a concert tomorrow’) or REPETITION (*Он каждый день встаёт и идёт на работу*. ‘He gets up and goes to work every day’).

#### **3.4. Step 4: Teaching all other VoM in the present tense (via D verbs)**

For VoM in the present tense, most RL2 textbooks customarily input multidirectional verbs as observable random motions (*Он ходит по парку*. ‘He is walking around the park’) notwithstanding their sporadic usage. The context-based approach recommends starting with the more frequent meaning of the round trips repetition, utilizing the concept of D verbs (*ходил*) from Context 1 as a bridge to Context Situation 3. Here is the possible simple explanation: Context Situation 3 unites all motions, except for ongoing motions in a single direction. Among them, the meaning of repetitions, such as repetition of the round trips indicated by D verbs in the ABC story, is most common. In short, Context Situation 3 is D verbs in the present: *Каждый день Пух ходит к Кролику, чтобы пообедать*. ‘Every day Pooh goes to Rabbit’s for lunch’. Already familiar with the concept of D verbs, novice students easily grasp the usage of the non-directional stems in such cases.

Other meanings, like motion in a generalized meaning (*Летом все ездят отдыхать*. ‘Everyone goes on vacation in summer’), ability to perform a motion (*Ребенок уже ходит*. The child is already walking’) or

random motions in the moment of speech (*Ребёнок ездит на велосипеде по двору. 'The child is riding around the yard on his bike'*) may follow at the novice level if time permits.

### **3.5. Step 5: В каком контексте? Practicing visualization in translation**

The context-based approach emphasizes translation as the most efficient way of acquiring Russian VoM. Translation allows students to visualize motion events through Russian eyes and select the correct Russian equivalent to the generic English motion verbs GO and COME. Translation assignments instantly reveal acquisition difficulties and allow the instructor to intervene with additional scaffolding (Wertz 1979, 240). While Exercise 12 presents a sample review, Exercise 13 offers a language-production check via translation, which is less challenging when students are equipped with knowledge of the Context Situations, the NO GO Rule, and the ABC principle.

## **4. Suggested sample exercises**

*Exercise 1. (A) Read about practices of analyzing the context for the verb GO.*

### Placing motion verbs in Russian context

Russian speakers are VERY SPECIFIC when they describe motion. To pick out the correct Russian equivalents of the English motion verbs GO, COME, FLY, CARRY, DRIVE, WALK, etc., look at a motion event “through Russian eyes.” Take the following steps:

- (1) separate events that have happened (they are described in Russian in the past tense) from the events that are happening or happen (described in the present tense);
- (2) in the present tense, separate single directed ongoing motions from all other cases.
- (3) these divisions create three major contextual situations:

Context Situation 1. Motion event in the past tense context: description of a round trip within the sequence of events.

Context Situation 2. Motion in the present tense context: ongoing in a single direction.

Context Situation 3. Motion in the present tense context: all other cases.

(B) Supply the number of the Context Situation to the English sentences below. You do not need to translate the sentences. Just practice analyzing the context.

- (1) We are going to a concert tonight. (\_\_\_\_\_)
- (2) The children did not go for a walk because of the rain. (\_\_\_\_\_)
- (3) Katya is on her way to the library. (\_\_\_\_\_)
- (4) I go to my history class once a week. (\_\_\_\_\_)
- (5) I returned from my friend's house at 4 pm. (\_\_\_\_\_)
- (6) I go to my friend's house a lot to study. (\_\_\_\_\_)

Key to Exercise 1(B): (1) 2; (2) 1; (3) 2; (4) 3; (5) 1; (6) 3.

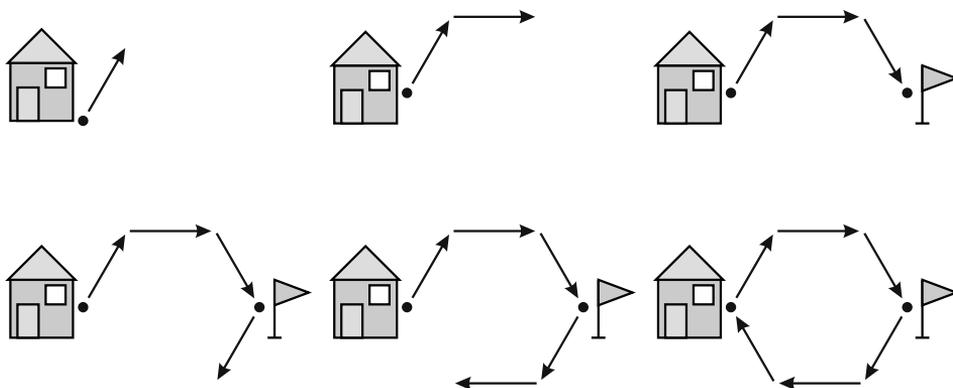
Exercise 2. Read the story about Winnie's trip to his friend Rabbit's place. Assign the highlighted verbs of motion to every next leg of the route at the pictures presented below. Identify the verb that signifies the completed round trip.

#### Винни Пух и Кролик

Один раз Винни-Пух пошёл в гости к Кролику. Он шёл и пел песню. Он пришёл к Кролику и съел весь его мёд. Потом он съел всё, что дал ему Кролик, ... и пошёл домой. Он шёл домой и думал о Кролике. Пух пришёл домой и лёг спать.

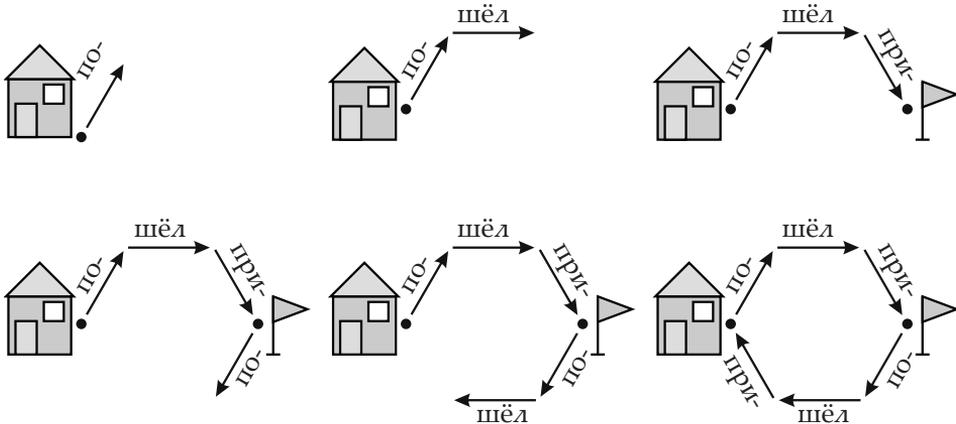
Как вы думаете, почему Винни-Пух ходил в гости? Он ходил к Кролику, чтобы пообедать!

Figure 2.



Key to Exercise 2:

Figure 3.



Exercise 3. (A) Learn strategies that will help you translate the verb WENT (BY ITSELF): in the picture, assign letter A to the verb пошёл; B to шёл; C to пришёл, indicating the legs of the route. Assign letter D to the verb ходил, indicating a round trip.

Key to exercise 3(A): 🔍 refer to Figure 1.

(B) Analyze with English-Russian substitutions in the ABC of Going Formula:

The ABC of GOING (by itself)

In the pictogram, the simple formula of the single round trip is:

$$(A + B + C) \times 2 = D$$

In Russian, the letters stand for the following verbs:

$$(\text{ПОШЁЛ} + \text{ШЁЛ} + \text{ПРИШЁЛ}) \times 2 = \text{ХОДИЛ}$$

The A, B and C verbs contain the same directional stem that implies a vector. The D verb indicates a completed round trip, an “event,” but not a direction, and possesses a different non-directional stem.

In English, the ABC formula is (roughly) equivalent to

Went + went + arrived = went

In English, WENT is used in three cases: for the first two legs of the trip (“started the trip” and “was on the way”) and for the completed trip. As you can see, there is no one single translation to the verb go in the past tense.

(C) Learn to visualize with the NO GO rule:

#### NO GO rule

When translating an expression with go from English into Russian in the past tense, FREEZE, and do not go too fast. There is NO one GO in Russian. For a correct translation, VISUALIZE “the ABC equals D” picture, pick out the correct letter equivalent, and substitute it with the relevant verb in Russian.

(D) Analyze the chart (note that number 1 after the letter indicates “by itself”):

English	Visualize it!	Index	In Russian
Winnie WENT to his friend Rabbit.	Went (= Started a trip)	A1	пошёл
Winnie WENT (~WAS WALKING) for 20 minutes	Went (= Was on the way)	B1	шёл
On Monday, Winnie WENT to visit his friend Rabbit	Went (= Made a round trip)	D1	ходил

*Exercise 4. Match the bolded Russian verbs in the left column to their letter counterparts in the right column.*

(1) Винни-Пух <b>ХОДИЛ</b> в гости.	A verb (went = started a trip)
(2) Винни <b>ПОШЁЛ</b> к Кролику.	B verb (went = was on the way, was walking)
(3) Он <b>ШЁЛ</b> и пел песню.	D verb (went = made a round trip)
(4) Он <b>ПОШЁЛ</b> домой.	
(5) Он <b>ШЁЛ</b> и думал о Кролике.	

*Key to Exercise 4:* (1) D verb; (2) A verb; (3) B verb; (4) A verb; (5) B verb

*Exercise 5. Read the sentences below and fill in the blank with A1, B1 or D1.*

- (1) Вчера я ходил к зубному врачу. (\_\_\_\_\_)
- (2) Он пошёл на работу. (\_\_\_\_\_)
- (3) Когда я шёл в магазин, я встретил друга. (\_\_\_\_\_)
- (4) Мы не ходили в гости вчера. (\_\_\_\_\_)
- (5) Утром у него была температура, и он не пошёл в университет. (\_\_\_\_\_)
- (6) Мы шли и разговаривали. (\_\_\_\_\_)

*Key to Exercise 5:* (1) D1; (2) A1; (3) B1; (4) D1; (5) A1; (6) B1.

*Exercise 6. Create a story about trips using the words provided: ходил (когда, куда) – пошёл (куда, когда) – пришёл (куда, когда).*

- (1) (в субботу, в гости к другу) – (к нему, в 5 часов дня) – (домой, в час ночи)
- (2) (в воскресенье, в спортзал) – (в зал, в 12 часов) – (домой, в 2 часа)

*Key to Exercise 6:* A sample story: В субботу я ходил в гости к другу. Я пошёл к нему в 5 часов дня. Я пришёл домой в час ночи! Поздно!

*Exercise 7. Read the story about the good friends and the train ride. Assign the highlighted verbs of motion to every next leg of the route to the pictures presented below. Identify the verb that signifies the completed round trip.*

Весёлые соседи – хорошие друзья

Это соседи и хорошие друзья. Один раз они поехали на поезде в далёкие края. Они ехали и пели песни. Они приехали в далёкие края (мы не знаем, что они там делали – отдыхали, наверное). Потом они поехали домой. Когда они ехали домой, они опять пели. С весёлой песенкой они приехали домой.

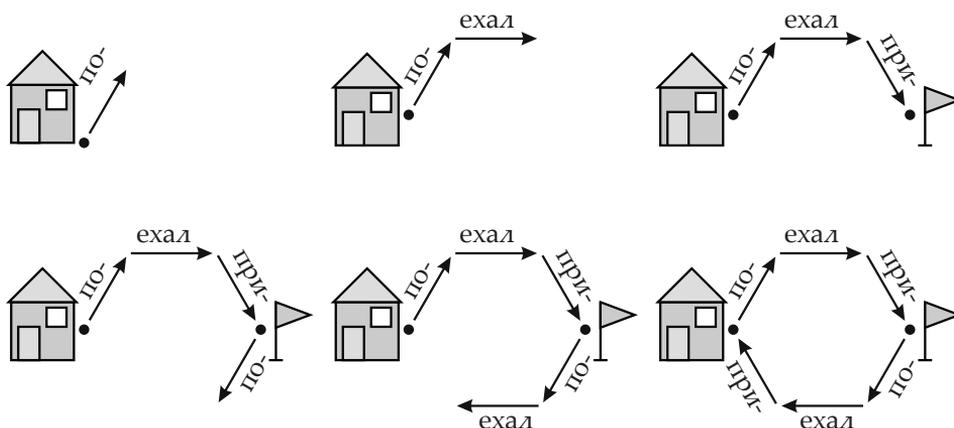
Куда они ездили? – Они ездили в далёкие края.

Зачем? – Наверное, они ездили отдыхать.

 refer to Figure 2

Key to Exercise 7:

Figure 4.

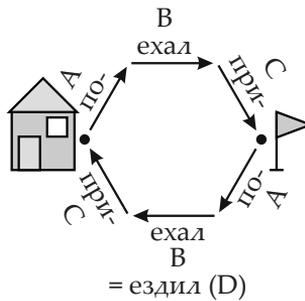


*Exercise 8. Learn the strategies that will help you to translate the verb WENT (BY VEHICLE):*

*(A) In the picture, assign letter A to the verb поехал; B to ехал; C to приехал, indicating the legs of the route. Assign letter D to the verb ездил indicating a completed round trip.*

*Key to Exercise 8(A):*

*Figure 5.*



*(B) Analyze with English–Russian substitutions in the ABC of Going Formula:*

The ABC of GOING (utilizing a vehicle)  
With every letter representing a different leg of the trip, the formula of the trip is the following:

$$(A + B + C) \times 2 = D$$

In Russian, it is equivalent to

$$\text{ПОЕХАЛ} + \text{ЕХАЛ} + \text{ПРИЕХАЛ} (\times 2) = \text{ЕЗДИЛ}$$

The A, B and C VERBS contain directional stem that implies a vector. The D-VERB indicates a round trip and has a non-directional stem..  
In English it is (roughly) equivalent to

$$\text{Went} + \text{went} + \text{arrived} = \text{went}$$

To translate WENT (UTILIZING A VEHICLE) into Russian correctly, apply the NO GO rule and visualize the trip details.

(C) Review Exercise 3 (C) and apply the NO GO rule to the ABC of going by vehicle.

(D) Analyze the chart (note that number 2 after the letter indicates “by vehicle”):

English	Visualize it!	Index	In Russian
One fine day, my friend <b>went</b> by train to distant lands.	Went by vehicle (= Started a trip)	A2	поехал
He rode a train ( <b>went</b> ) for two days!	Went by vehicle (= Was on the way)	B2	ехал
My friend <b>went</b> to distant lands for the summer (and returned).	Went by vehicle (= Made a round trip)	D2	ездил

Exercise 9. Match the VoM from the Russian sentences with the correct letter.

1) Друзья <b>ехали</b> и пели песни.	A2 verb (started a trip by vehicle)
2) Они <b>поехали</b> домой.	B2 verb (was on the way by vehicle)
3) Друзья <b>ездили</b> в далёкие края.	D2 verb (made a round trip by vehicle)

Key to Exercise 9: (1) B verb; (2) A verb; (3) D verb

Exercise 10. Read, analyze, and fill in the blanks with A2, B2 or D2.

- (1) Вчера он ездил к родителям. (\_\_\_\_\_)
- (2) Он ехал в метро и читал. (\_\_\_\_\_)
- (3) Мой муж поехал на вокзал встречать (meet) друга. (\_\_\_\_\_)
- (4) Они ехали на поезде два дня! (\_\_\_\_\_)
- (5) Летом она ездила в Россию. (\_\_\_\_\_)

Key to Exercise 10: (1) D2; (2) B2; (3) A2; (4) B2; (5) D2.

Exercise 11. Create a story about travelling using the words provided: *ездил* (когда, куда) – *поехал* (куда, когда) – *приехал* (куда, когда).

- (1) (вчера, на работу) – (туда, в 7 часов утра) – (домой, в 6 часов вечера)
- (2) (осенью, в Казань) – (в Казань, в сентябре) – (в Москву, в ноябре)
- (3) (на выходные, на дачу) – (туда, в субботу утром) – (домой, в воскресенье вечером)

Key to Exercise 11: A sample story for prompt 2 might read as follows: Осенью мой друг ездил в Казань. Он поехал туда в сентябре, а приехал назад в Москву в ноябре.

Exercise 12. Analyze the summary chart presenting six possibilities for translating the verb *GO* as exemplified by the two stories. Memorize the forms:

The Six Ways to Go<sup>1</sup>

Subject displacement	A Started the trip	B Was on the way	D Made a round trip
By itself, no help (1)	Пошёл	шёл	ходил
Utilizing a vehicle (2)	поехал	ехал	ездил

Exercise 13: В каком контексте? Read the following English sentences and visualize the motion event through Russian eyes. Supply the numbers of the Context Situation (1, 2, 3). For Context 1, supply the A, B, C, or D index. Add (1) if the subject moves with no external help and (2) if the subject moves by vehicle. Write all possible translations of these sentences:

- (1) We are going to the concert tonight. (\_\_\_\_\_)
- (2) The children did not go for a walk because of the rain. (\_\_\_\_\_)
- (3) Katya is on her way to the Library. (\_\_\_\_\_)
- (4) I go to my history class once a week. (\_\_\_\_\_)

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<sup>1</sup> C verbs are not shown in the table because they are not translated as “go.”

- (5) Our friends went to France. (\_\_\_\_\_)
- (6) After class I went to my professor. (\_\_\_\_\_)
- (7) He came home late. (\_\_\_\_\_)

*Key to Exercise 13:*

- (1) (2) Мы идем на концерт сегодня вечером. Мы едем на концерт сегодня вечером
- (2) (1: D 1, A1). Дети не ходили гулять из-за дождя. Дети не пошли гулять из-за дождя.
- (3) (2) Катя идёт в библиотеку. Катя едет в библиотеку
- (4) (3) Я хожу на лекцию по истории раз в неделю. Я езжу на лекцию по истории раз в неделю
- (5) (1: A2, D2) Наши друзья поехали во Францию. Наши друзья ездили во Францию
- (6) (1: A1, D1, A2, D2) После урока я пошёл к профессору. После урока я ходил к профессору. После урока я поехал к профессору. После урока я ездил к профессору.
- (7) (1: C1, C2) Он пришел домой поздно. Он приехал домой поздно.

## 5. Conclusion

The purpose of this article was to outline the following steps of the context-based approach to teaching VoM at the novice level:

- (1) To introduce three Context Situations based on the oppositions PAST TENSE VERSUS PRESENT TENSE and ONGOING MOTION IN SINGLE DIRECTION VERSUS ALL OTHER CASES;
- (2) To begin input with storytelling in the PAST tense (Context Situation 1);
- (3) To visualize with pictograms and supply A, B, and C letters to the legs of the round trip (VoM with directional stem)
- (4) To envision as a summary event and apply D letter to the verb signifying a round trip (VoM with non-directional stem);
- (5) To use the formula "ABC equals D" and the NO GO rule to aid in the correct translation of the verbs GO and COME in the PAST tense; and
- (6) To differentiate between ongoing single directed motion (Context Situation 2) and all other motions (Context Situation 3) to aid in the correct translation of verbs GO and COME in the present tense.

The visualization method used in the presentation of the PAST tense forms (Context Situation 1) is different from the illustrations of unidirectional and multidirectional motions in most RL2 textbooks. Among all meanings of VoM in the present tense, the context-based approach suggests covering with novice level students the meanings of ongoing motion in a single direction (Context Situation 2) and only the meaning of trips repetition for all other cases of motions with non-directional stems (Context Situation 3).

The context-based approach described above answers the following observed teaching needs: (1) the need for a conceptualized presentation of VoM in “Russian motion talk” instead of separating unprefixes and prefixed VoM in different chapters (Hasko 2009, 381–82); (2) the need for developing an automatic habit of encoding information and shifting the instruction to conceptual distinctions (Pavlenko and Volynsky 2015, 46); and (3) the need to make conceptual schemata visible to L2 learners and to create tasks related to various scenarios (Hasko 2009, 382). Teaching VoM with the context-based approach in some way supports the idea that the notorious struggle with aspectual pairs is unnecessary in RL2 teaching (Soboleva 2014, 168–69), at least at the novice level.

The further extension of the context-based approach to VoM at the intermediate level is beyond the scope of this article. However, it may include the following:

- (1) Extending a similar principle of explanation with “ABC equals D” formula to other VoM — for example: (*полетел + летел + прилетел*) X 2 = *летал*.
- (2) Introducing the contextual specifics of VoM with directional (qualifying, spatial) prefixes and directional stems, for example: *вышел, отошёл, прошёл, перешёл, вошёл, дошёл*.
- (3) Introducing the contextual specifics of VoM with directional prefixed and non-directional stems, in the meaning of general validity (*Он выходил на 5 минут. ‘He stepped out for five minutes (but he is back now)’. Сантехник приходил? ‘Did the plumber come [he is not here now]?’ Мама приезжала? Did mom come [but she is no longer here]?’*)

The suggested approach to teaching VoM grounded on the usage of context in RL2 explanations (Wertz 1984; Kagan, Miller, and Kudyma 2006; Soboleva 2014) has yet to find followers and supporters; however,

anecdotal evidence based on observations of students' performance suggests significant progress in VoM retention and production. The context-based approach could offer an illustrative answer to the question outlined in the introduction: "В каком контексте? Think of a situation when you could say: Они не приходили – Они не пришли. 'They did not come [imperfective]. – They did not come [perfective].' Both phrases render the contextual nuances of the PAST tense (Context Situation 1); however, *не приходили* contains a non-directional stem that denotes a general validity, an event that has never taken place, while *не пришли* is a VoM with directional stem meaning that the arrival to the point of reference (C verb action in the ABC story) has never taken place.

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