From 'truth' to Concessives: Semantic Development[1]

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1 Introduction

> Jack: That, my dear Algy, is the whole truth pure and simple.
>
> Algernon: Truth is rarely pure and never simple.
>
> *Oscar Wilde, "The importance of being Earnest".*

My paper strives to explain the development of a concessive meaning in the current polysemy of the Russian word *pravda* 'truth'. Further, it indicates certain general semantic trends in the development of concessives.

On the whole, Russian words *pravda* 'truth' and *istina* 'truth' are well researched, partly because in Russian, as in many other languages, 'truth' is one of the pivotal notions in philosophy, ethics, theology, logic, and semantics. However, both *pravda* and *istina* are also strongly featured in ethnolinguistic research on Russian as words which are central to the Russian linguistic worldview [Arutiunova 1995: 7], and which are presumably related to one of the most important Russian cultural scripts – namely, that of sincerity [Wierzbicka 2002].

As such, both *pravda* and *istina* have been contrasted against the word *truth*. The semantics which is expressed by the English *truth*, in

Russian is divided between *pravda* – primarily factual truth, as in 'That's true', and *istina* – primarily putative truth, as in 'A great truth dawned on me: All people are kind'. This is not to say that all other languages necessarily have only one synthetic concept of 'truth'. For example, in English, to confirm that an utterance corresponds to reality, one would use *true*, and not *truth*, as in – *He's very lazy. – That's true*, rather than *[??]That's the truth.*

However, *pravda* and *istina* are peculiar in that they share in almost equal proportions the main meanings of the English *truth*. This fact itself has given rise to many theories about the nature of the Russian concept of 'truth' which are too numerous to be recounted or even listed here. I will confine myself to outlining briefly the main theoretical and practical concerns which arise in connection with these Russian concepts.

1) semantics of *pravda* and *istina*, especially as compared to the semantics of the English *truth* and *true*;

2) correlation of *pravda* and *istina* within the Russian language, partly as a matter of historical development.

Wierzbicka [2002] singles out two meanings of *pravda*. The first one is a predicative *pravda 1*, which is considered a universal semantic prime, same as the English *true*, as in *Eto pravda* 'This is true'[2]. The second is *pravda 2*, as in *govorit' pravdu* 'to speak the truth', for which the following definition is suggested in [Wierzbicka 2002][3]:

> *Ivan said pravda 2* =
> Ivan said something
> It was the truth 1
> people say two kinds of things to each other
> some things are the truth 1
> it is good when someone wants to say such things to other people
> some things are untruth 1
> it is bad when someone wants to say such things to other people
> Ivan did not say anything of this second kind of things'

In her account, the main difference between the universal concept *pravda 1* and the purely Russian concept *pravda 2* is that of choice and the subsequent ethical evaluation of this choice by the speaker. The universal concepts of 'true' and 'not true' do not imply any choice on the part of the author of the utterance; if something is deemed true (*pravda*), it mere-

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[2] Though in an entirely different ideological paradigm, *truth* is also treated as a primitive concept indefinable within language, by formal logicians and semanticists.

[3] Her paper is in Russian and because of space limitations, I provide my own translations of her definitions.

ly means that the speaker thinks the utterance corresponds to reality, it something is deemed not true, then the speaker thinks the utterance does not correspond to reality. On the other hand, *pravda 2* and *nepravda 2* are viewed as a conscious choice in the situation when one *knows* the truth – and either chooses to tell it (*pravda 2*) or to distort it (*nepravda 2*).

Further, Wierzbicka views the major difference between the Russian *pravda 2* and the English *truth* in that the former is opposed to *nepravda 2* 'untruth', whereas the latter exists outside of this black-and-white opposition. Wierzbicka's suggested definition for the English *truth* is as follows:

> *Truth*
> people say many things
> some things are true 1, some things are not true 1
> people think many things
> some things are true 1, some things are not true 1
> It is good when a person can know about something that it is true 1'

This definition of *truth* combines some elements of *pravda* (adherence to the facts in one's utterance), and some elements of *istina*, namely, true knowledge of important things, which is not necessarily spoken of. Consider Wierbicka's definition of *istina*:

> *Istina*
> It is good if people can know some things about some things
> Many people don't know these things
> People know that when somebody is thinking about something, it can be not truth1
> It is good when people can know about some things that these things are truth 1

The difference between the mundane and at the same time ethical nature of *pravda* and the sublime or even divine nature of *istina* has been commented upon by practically every researcher who wrote on the topic. Thus, I. Levontina notes that "*istina* is served by priests of religion and science" [Levontina 1995: 33].

Interestingly, this distribution of *pravda* as mundane and *istina* as divine is a relatively recent historical development. According to Boris Uspensky, on the earlier stages of the Russian language development, the correlation of *pravda* and *istina* was exactly the opposite: "*Pravda* is

conceptualized as a divine thing, and *istina* as a human one" [Uspensky 1994: 190]. [Arutiunova 1995: 7-16] and [Lishaev 2006: 176-184] further elaborate on this semantic development. [Lishaev 2006: 176-184] analyzes lexicographic accounts of *pravda* and *istina* over the centuries, as well as their history as religious and philosophical concepts, and delineates a path that the two concepts have followed: starting out as a unique, divine entity (*Bozh'ja Pravda* 'God's *pravda*')[4], by the XX century *pravda* becomes "secularized" and thus loses its uniqueness (*U kazhdogo svoia pravda* 'Everybody has his/her own *pravda*'); *istina*, at the same time, gains a higher and more objective status (*Pravda u kazhdogo svoja, istina u vsekh odna* 'Each person has his/her own *pravda*, but *istina* is one for everybody').

While each of these descriptions, especially [Wierzbicka 2002] succeeds in capturing certain crucial aspects of the usage of these two important concepts, *pravda* and *istina*, they fail to account for the entire range of contexts in which these two words, especially *pravda,* can be used. To mention just a few, there is nothing in the definition of *pravda 2* that can explain such contexts as *strashnaia pravda* 'ugly truth', *uzhasnaia pravda* 'horrible truth', *dokopat'sia do pravdy* 'to unearth the truth', etc. Moreover, *pravda* can be used in contexts which fall completely outside the scope of what the suggested definition of *pravda 2* covers; cf. *pravda* in its concessive conjunction usages, as in *On umnyj, **pravda**, lenivyj* 'He is smart ***though*** lazy'.

While [Wierzbicka 2002] proposes a two-way polysemy for *pravda*, with *pravda 1* as the universal semantic prime, other accounts of *pravda* speak of this concept as something with a single synthetic meaning; thus [Lishaev 2006] considers such different usages as *U kazhdogo svoja pravda* 'Everyone has his/her own truth' and *poiski pravdy* 'the search for truth' within the same synthetic meaning.

However, it is absolutely impossible to account for all the usages of *pravda* which are often mutually exclusive (such as *strashnaia pravda* 'ugly truth' as opposed to *sviataja pravda* 'holy truth') without postulating different meanings for this word[5].

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[4] Glosses for the Russian examples are not provided, as the morphological composition of words is immaterial for the purposes of the current paper, whose focus is on semantics and pragmatics.

[5] [Arutiunova 1995: 17] discriminates between 'good truth' and 'bad truth', yet postulates no semantic definitions for these separate meanings.

The polysemy of *pravda* argued for in the current paper includes nine different lexemes (separate meanings) grouped into four semantic blocks. Each of the lexemes is characterized by a particular and distinct set of linguistic properties.

Thus, clearly, the polysemy of *pravda* that is argued for in this paper, is very different from what is proposed in [Wierzbicka 2002]. The suggested polysemy is presented in the next section along with some commentary. The reasons why I cannot entirely subscribe to Wierzbicka's division of *pravda* into two meanings are as follows.

1) First of all, Wierbicka's description does not account for the non-speech usages of *pravda*, such as *uznat' pravdu* 'to learn the truth', *iskat' pravdu* 'to search for the truth'. An entire and (at least, in the case of the Russian language), very important meaning of *pravda* is missing. Wierzbicka considers the non-spoken 'truth', truth as the true knowledge as characteristic of the English concept *truth* and, indeed, in her description of the English word, the non-speech component is present. Her above-quoted definition of *truth* covers what I consider three distinct meanings – the speech 'truth' as in *to speak pure truth*, the 'truth' as the knowledge of facts as in *to learn the truth too late*, and the 'truth' as certain sublime knowledge of the most important things in life, as in *the grand truth that Love will save the world*.

However, the non-spoken 'truth' is also very much present in the Russian language and constitutes, in fact, one of its primary meanings. It possesses a very distinct set of linguistic properties, such as, for example, the semantic component of unwillingness to reveal and admit something, which triggers its co-occurrence with negative adjectives ('terrible', 'horrifying', 'chilling') and verbs of physical effort (such as 'to unearth', 'to dig out'). Semantic components and connotations present in non-spoken *pravda* determine the development of some other meanings of this word, as will be shown below.

2) Another theoretical objection concerns Wierzbicka's analysis of *pravda 1* as a semantic universal prime, more or less equal to the English *true*. The problem is that the usage of the Russian *pravda*, even in its most neutral predicative contexts is different from that of its English counterpart *true*. The main characteristic of the universal 'true' (and English *true*) is its indifference to the speaker's will or his/her intention to be truthful; universal 'true' merely describes the correspondece of the utterance to reality. As it turns out, such usages are not the most typical for the Russian *pravda*. Certainly, *pravda* is possible in contexts like (1) where it means a correct statement without any reference to the author's conscious choice to be sincere:

(1) *Eto **pravda**, Kanada – sil'naja federacija s bol'shim opytom* (Iz-

vestja, 2001.07.09).
   'This is **true**, Canada is a strong federation with a big experience'

   Yet even in predicative usages, *pravda* usually tends to convey the idea of sincerity rather than merely that of correctness. First of all, with attributes meaning 'ultimate', like *chistaia* 'pure', *sviataia* 'holy', *istinnaia* 'gospel, lit: true' *pravda* characterizes not only the utmost degree of correctness and correspondence to reality, but also the utter degree of the speaker's sincerity.
   Second, even without attributes, *pravda* in predicative contexts usually contains additional semantic connotations and implications, absent in the English *true*. The most usual connotation that *pravda* carries in such usages is that of concession – partial admittance of the opponent's point of view, with a further attempt to promote one's own, different point of view, and as such, it appears in contrastive sentences with *no* 'but':

   (2) *Vishnevyj sad prodan, ego uzhe net, eto **pravda**, **pravda**, no ne plach', mama, u tebia ostalas' zhizn' vperedi* (A. Chekhov, Vishnevyj sad)
   'The cherry garden is sold, it is not there anymore, it is **true, true**, but don't cry, Mom, you have your life left' (A. Chekhov, The cherry garden)

   Thus, while I do not deny the existence of the universal semantic prime 'true', in Russian it is not expressed by the predicative usages of the noun *pravda* alone; rather, this meaning is spread over several lexical items and constructions, with *pravda* being only one of them.
   The closest that *pravda* comes to the English *true* or to the universal 'true', is in interrogative sentences:

   (4) *Slyshala, chto ot ozhogov pomogaet kefir. Eto **pravda**?*
      'I heard that sour milk helps for burns. Is that **true**?'

   More neutral ways of expressing the idea of the universal 'true' in Russian affirmative sentences would be *Eto tak* 'That is so', *Eto verno* 'It is correct/true', as well as some others. Indeed, a simple experiment shows that the Russian predicative construction *Eto pravda* 'lit. It is truth' is not at all the preferred way of translating the English *This/it is true*.
   In the parallel English-Russian database of the Russian National Corpus, out of 45 contexts of the English *This/it is true*, only 2 are translated with the use of predicative *pravda*. There are 5 instances of *verno* 'correct/true', as well as several occurrences of *tak* 'so', *destvitel'no* 'real-

ly', *prav* 'right', *Ja soglasen* 'I agree' and even *konechno* 'certainly' and *da* 'yes'; consider:

(5) *Tip reflected, as they journeyed on, that this was **true*** (L. Frank Baum, The Marvelous Land of Oz)
   'A on, pozhaluj, **prav**", - podumal Tip' – 'right'

(6) *"Very **true**," agreed the Scarecrow* " (same source)
   '**Soglasen**, - kivnul Strashila' – 'agreeable'

(7) *"That is **true**", replied the Sorceress slowly* (same source)
   'Vse eto **tak**, - netoroplivo progovorila volshebnica' – 'so'

(8) ***True**, we might form classes in thinking and reading* (R. Bradbury, Fahrenheit 451)
   'Eto **verno**, my mogli by uchit' liudej chitat' i myslit' – 'correct'

(9) ***True**, but not an English woman* (C. Dickens, The Tale of two Cities)
   "**Da**, no ne na anglichanke" – 'yes'

One more consideration to be taken into account when evaluating the predicative *pravda*'s claim to the status of the universal semantic prime is the status of its opposite, the predicative *nepravda* 'untruth', which is also considered a universal semantic prime in [Wierzbicka 2002]. While *pravda*, though very different from the English *true*, still features a great number of contexts where it purely means 'correct' or 'that is so', without an implication of sincerity, *nepravda* is almost always used in contexts which imply insincerity and not merely incorrectness. These two concepts are fairly asymmetrical in this respect. None of the Russian dictionaries postulates a separate meaning of 'incorrect statement' for *nepravda* and its usage in contexts like (10), with no implication of sincerity, are rather rare and pragmatically akward:

(10) – *Mne kazhetsia, Pushkin rodilsia v XIX veke. – Eto **nepravda***
   'I think Pushkin was born in the XIX century. This is **untruth'**

   3) The third, methodological objection concerns expressing meanings in terms of semantic primes only; while this is undeniably extremely valuable for cross-linguistic comparison, within one language it is not always helpful, as it might hinder understanding the logic of semantic development in cases of polysemy. Sometimes, the whole polysemy is centered around one semantic "idea" – some component which might not

necessarily be a semantic prime, yet is found in some form in most of the word's meanings. It seems to be the case in Russian *pravda* whose polysemy is centered around the two main ideas – 'correspondence to reality' and 'unwillingness to admit'.

2 The polysemy of 'pravda'

Below is the polysemy of *pravda*, as suggested in the current paper. It attempts to demonstrate the following properties of this word:

1) semantic differences among different lexemes;
2) semantic similarities among different lexemes;
3) differences in thematic roles, syntactic valencies and co-occurrence properties.

Each of the lexemes possesses a distinct set of linguistic properties, determined by their semantics.

pravda 1.1

Examples: *Pravda okazalas' uzhasnoj; Vy dolzhny priznat' pravdu o genocide; Ja otkroju tebe pravdu o tvoem otce; On skryval pravdu ot samogo sebia; Ja xochu znat' pravdu*

'The truth turned out to be terrible'; 'You ought to admit the truth about the genocide'; 'I will reveal to you the truth about your father'; 'He concealed the truth from himself'; 'I want to know the truth'

Meaning: *Pravda ob A1* 'The truth about A1' = 'The way A1 is; some people did not know what A1 is like or thought that A1 is different; the speaker thinks that it is important for people to know what A1 is like; the speaker thinks that some people do not want to admit it or do not want others to know it'

Commentary. This is the "non-spoken" truth, truth as knowledge of facts. It is characterized by both negative and positive connotations; it usually means the knowledge of some unpleasant facts which somebody wishes to conceal and hates to admit, yet this knowledge is at the same time considered necessary and valuable. In this respect, it is not different from its English counterpart *harsh <chilling, hideous> truth*.

This lexeme has two thematic roles – topic (the truth *about* something) and content (the truth which consists *in* something). The role of topic is a syntactic valency: *pravda* governs a PP; cf. *pravda o/pro* 'truth about'. *Pravda 1.1* mostly co-occurs with adjectives carrying negative evaluation and verbs a) of physical effort ('unearth', 'dig up'); b) of concealment and revelation ('to conceal', 'to hide', 'to reveal', 'to show', 'to demonstrate'); c) of acknowledging ('to look in the eyes', 'to admit'); d)) denoting part/whole ('entire', 'whole', 'partial').

pravda 1.2

Examples: *Ja skazal tebe pravdu*; *V ee slovakh net ni kapli pravdy*; *Pravda, chto on voeval?*; *Eto chistaia <sviataja> pravda*.

'I told you the truth'; 'In her words there is not a drop of truth'; 'Is it true that he fought in the war?'; 'This is pure <holy> truth'.

Meaning: *pravda* 'Utterance A1 which corresponds to the way things are'

Commentary. This meaning expresses the spoken truth, a true utterance; it is not known whether the correspondence to reality in an utterance is a result of possessing true knowledge or of a conscious moral choice. In fact, the only context where one can say for sure that *pravda* refers to 'the truth as opposed to a lie' is when *pravda* is the direct complement of such the verbs *govorit'* 'to say, to speak' and *skazat'* 'to tell', as in *govorit' <skazat'> pravdu* 'to tell the truth'.

This lexeme has one thematic role – the content of the utterance and no syntactic valencies: it does not govern any NPs or sentences; cf. the impossibility of **Pravda, chto on voeval, popala v gazety* '*Truth, that he fought in the war, got into newspapers'. It occurs with adjectives a) denoting positive evaluation ('pure', 'holy', 'gospel'); b) denoting part/whole ('entire', 'whole', 'partial').

pravda 1.3

Examples: *khudozhstvennaia pravda*; *pravda etogo fil'ma*; *chelovesheskaia pravda kharakterov*; *V etoj p'jese mnogo psikhologicheskoj pravdy*; *Fil'm zanimatel'nyj, no v nem malo istoricheskoj pravdy*.

'artistic truth'; 'the truth of this movie'; 'the human truth of the characters'; 'In this play there is a lot of psychological truth'; 'The movie is fun but there is little historical truth in it'

Meaning: *Pravda A1* 'truth of A1' = 'Correspondence of image A1 to the way something is with respect to feature A2'

Commentary. This meaning also exploits the idea of correspondence to reality, only, unlike *pravda 1.2*, it refers to images and representations which are not necessarily verbal, and the correspondence itself is only partial, with respect to one particular feature.

This lexeme has two thematic roles – representation (film, book, play) and feature (psychological, historical). The role of representation triggers a syntactic valency: *pravda* governs an NP in GEN: *pravda knigi* 'the truth of the book'. This lexeme co-occurs with nouns meaning informational objects, such as works of art, books, etc., as well as with adjectives referring to different aspects according to which one can evaluate a work of art – 'aesthetic', 'psychological', 'emotional', etc.

pravda 2, *bookish* or *outdated*.

Examples: *U kazhdogo svoja pravda*; *Pravda na ego storone*; *Ja oshchutil vsiu pravdu ee slov*.

'Everybody has his own truth'; 'He is right; lit.:The truth is on his side'; 'I felt how right he was; lit.: I felt all the truth of his words'

Meaning: *Pravda A1* 'truth of A1' 'The right position or opinion of the person A1 or the rightness of the opinion or position of the person A1'

This meaning is inherited from Old Russian and related to the etymological origin of *pravda* from the adjective *prav* 'right'.

Commentary. This lexeme has one thematic role – that of the possessor; it is expressed as a syntactic valency as *pravda* governs an NP in GEN or a possessive adjective: *pravda* 'he-GEN truth', *svoja pravda* 'self's truth'.

pravda 3.1, *bookish* or *outdated.*

Examples: *iskat' pravdu, Nam pravdy ne najti*; *Net pravdy na zamle*.

'to seek the truth'; 'We won't find the truth'; 'There is not truth in this world'

Meaning: 'Fairness in the way things are'

Commentary. This meaning also incorporates the idea of correspondence - correspondence between how things should be and how they are in reality. This lexeme has no thematic roles or syntactic valencies.

pravda 3.2, *bookish* or *outdated.*

Examples: *vysshaja <svetlaja, blagodatnaja> pravda*; *Bozh'ja pravda*; *svet pravdy*; *zhit' po pravde*; *Kogda-nibud' na zemle vocaritsja Pravda*

'the loftiest <radiant, graceful> truth'; 'God's truth'; 'the light of truth'; 'to live according to the truth'; 'Some day the Truth will reign the earth'

Meaning: 'One of the highest moral values which consists in understanding what the good and right things are and in the behavior which corresponds to this understanding'

Commentary. This meaning is related both to the old concept of divine *pravda* as *pravednost'* 'righteousness' and to the idea of correspondence – namely, correspondence between one's values and what is right, as well as between one's actions and one's values. This lexeme has no thematic roles or syntactic valencies. It co-occurs with positively evaluated adjectives.

pravda 4.1, as a particle

Examples: *Pravda, pravda, - kivnul ja*; *On ved' ne ochen' xoroshij specialist, pravda?*; *Ty pridesh, ne pravda li?*

'"Right, right" – I nodded'; 'He isn't a very good specialist, right?'; 'You'll come, right?'

Meaning: 'The speaker confirms that the utterance A1 corresponds to the way things are'

Commentary. In this meaning, again the idea of correspondence is

paramount; though here *pravda* acts as a function word, it is very close in meaning to the predicative usages of the noun *pravda*. The difference is that in this meaning, *pravda* implies that the utterance whose correctness is under discussion, has already been made in the previous context and someone seeks its confirmation as true.

pravda 4.2, as an adverb

Examples: *Ona pravda reshila uexat'*; *Vecher i pravda vydalsia teplyj*; *Ty menia pravda libish?*

'She really decided to leave'; 'The evening turned out to really be warm'; 'Do you really love me?'

Meaning: *Pravda A1* 'really A1' = 'The speaker states that the situation A1 is taking place; before that, someone thought or stated that A1 isn't taking place' [usually with a phrasal stress: *Ego* $^{\downarrow}$*pravda ranili* 'He $^{\downarrow}$really was wounded']

Commentary. Again, despite its syntactically different status, semantically this *pravda* is very close to the predicative usages of the noun *pravda 1.2*. What is added to the idea of correspondence, is the implication that someone expected thing to be different and thus, the statement runs contrary to someone's expectations, hence its argumentative character and the strong phrasal stress. This lexeme has one thematic role – that of the content of the utterance, and no syntactic valencies.

pravda 4.3, as a conjunction

Examples: *On umnyj, pravda, lenivyj; Ja obiazatel'no priedu, pravda, poka ne znaju, kogda*

'He is intelligent though lazy'; 'I'll definitely come, though I don't know yet, when'

Meaning: *A1, pravda, A2* 'A1 though A2' = 'A1 is taking place; A2 is taking place; the speaker admits that A2 makes A1 less important; the speaker thinks A1 is slightly more important than A2'.

Commentary. This meaning carries imprints from both the first, non-spoken *pravda* 1.1, and the second, verbal *pravda* 1.2. Like the verbal *pravda*, it refers to utterances, yet it contains elements of negative evaluation and reluctance to admit the truth, characteristic of the non-spoken *pravda*. This lexeme has two thematic roles – two counter-directed situations, and no syntactic valencies.

3 From 'truth' to 'concession'

In this section, more argumentation is given in support of the proposed semantic analysis of *pravda* in its first meaning, as well as certain reasoning explaining the semantic development of *pravda* into a concessive conjunction.

Let us recall the definition proposed for *pravda 1*:

Pravda ob A1 'The truth about A1' = 'The way A1 is; some people did not know what A1 is like or thought that A1 is different; the speaker thinks that it is important for people to know what A1 is like; the speaker thinks that some people do not want to admit it or do not want others to know it'

To provide explanation for the multiple modal frames and implications in this definition, I intend to compare *pravda 1.1* to its close synonym, *fakt* 'fact'. Actually, some dictionaries equal 'truth' with 'facts'; cf. Webster's definition of truth: *truth* 2 a (1)**:** the state of being the case**:** FACT (2)**:** the body of real things, events, and facts. However, there are a few important distinctions between the two.

1) First of all, *fakty* 'facts' are neutral and objective, whereas the usage of the word *pravda* brings emotional polemical component and stirs controversy. When a person says *I want to know the facts* this means only wanting to know what took place. Saying *I want to know the truth* additionally implies that I had been previously told lies.

2) *Pravda* is unique and singular, facts can be multiple; cf. *Ja uznal novye fakty o ego detstve* 'I learned new facts about his childhood', but not **Ja uznal novuju pravdu o ego detstve* *'I learned a new truth about his childhood'; *Vot eshche odin fakt* 'Here's one more fact', but not *Vot eshche odna pravda* 'Here's one more truth'.

3) *Facts* are only building blocks in our understanding of the world; *pravda* gives the ultimate knowledge about the situation (similar to how *istina* gives us the ultimate knowledge about the universe). We use facts to build our theories, interpretations, guesses, conceptions: *Fakty govorjat protiv takoj interpretacii* 'Facts speak against such interpretation'; *Na osnovanii faktov mozhno predpolozhit, chto…* 'On the basis of facts, one can assume that…', but once we establish *pravda*, we do not seem to need anything else; cf. the ungrammaticality of:

(10) **Pravda govorit protiv takoj interpretacii*
    *'The truth speaks against such interpretation'

(11) **Na osnovanii pravdy mozhno predpolozhit, chto…*
    *'On the basis of the truth, one can assume that…'

4) Unlike the truth, facts can be interesting and uninteresting, important and unimportant, whereas the truth always constitutes a value and is always important; cf. *interesnyj <neinteresnyj>, znachitelnyj <malovazhnyj> fakt* 'interesting <uninteresting>, important <unimportant> fact', but not **interesnaja <neinteresnaja>, znachitelnaja <malovazhnaja> pravda* *'interesting <uninteresting>, important <unimportant> truth'.

5) The last and the most important aspect of *pravda* is that it always reveals negative, unpleasant side of objects and situations; cf. *pravda o shirokom rasprostranenii narkotikov v molodezhnoj srede <o zloupotreblenijax v psixiatricheskix bol'nicax, o Holokoste>* 'the truth about the wide spread of narcotics among the young <about the abuse in psychiatric wards, about the Holocaust>'. Facts, however, indifferent as they are to good or bad, desirable or undesirable, can be either hegative or positive or, most often neutral: *fakty o nashej galaktike* 'facts about our Galaxy', but not **the truth about our Galaxy.* Cf. also (12), but not (13):

(12) *Ja uznala novyj fakt o nachalnike tjur'my – okazyvaetsja, on sushchestvenno uluchshil uslovija soderzhanija zakljuchennyx*
 'I learned a new fact about the prison warden – it turns out, he's drastically improved the living conditions of the inmates'

(13) **Ja uznala pravdu o nachalnike tjur'my – okazyvaetsja, on sushchestvenno uluchshil uslovija soderzhanija zakljuchennyx*
 *'I learned the truth about the prison warden – it turns out, he's drastically improved the living conditions of the inmates'

Thus, if you learn the truth, you are often bound to discover something unpleasant. Because *pravda*, when discovered, presents a threat to the convenient status quo, people often try *to conceal it, hide it, distort it* (*skryt', iskazit'*). It is therefore diffucult to *unearth* (*dokopat'sja do*) it. Unlike the facts that can be easily accessible, *pravda* can only be found by effort and cannot be widely spread and known; thus, you cannot learn from an easily available source: *Ja uznala sledujushchij fakt: v rossijskom zakonodatelstve ne predusmotreno ugolovnoe nakazanie za fiktivnyj brak* 'I learned the following fact: Russian laws do not impose criminal penalty for fictitious marriage', but not ?*Ja uznala pravdu: v rossisjkom zakonodatelstve ne predusmotreno ugolovnoe nakazanie za fiktivnyj brak* ? 'I learned the truth: Russian laws do not impose criminal penalty for fictitious marriage'. Because it takes a lot of courage to admit the truth, people sometimes prefer to hide the truth even from themselves (*skryvat' pravdu ot sebja samix*), which is impossible for the facts: *On skryvaet pravdu ot sebja* 'He hides the truth from himself', but not **On skryvaet fakty ot sebja* 'He hides facts from himself'.
 Certainly, there are neutral usages of *pravda* where it does not imply a desire to conceal or previous lying as in *Ja xochu uznat' pravdu ob ustrojstve Vselennoj* 'I want to know the truth about how universe is organized'. This phrase points merely to the lack of knowledge and to the difficulty in accessing it. However, such usages, though entirely legitimate, are far less numerous than the pragmatically flavored ones.

Let us now consider how *pravda 1.1* is related to the concessive *pravda 4.3*. First of all, it must be said that this relation is not that of direct semantic motivation; rather, the first meaning of *pravda* finds reflection in several other meanings, including the concessive conjunction. First of all, part of the the definition of *pravda 1.1* contains the implication that the way A1 turned out to be is different from what people expected or were told previously; this is epy first element which connects the meaning of 'truth' and the meaning of concession. All "classical" concessives such as *although, despite* and others carry the implication that things turned out different from what could be expected: *Although it was raining, we went for a walk* [the natural expectation was that we would stay home].

What is more, this definition contains the implication 'some people do not want to admit it' and, hence, the reluctance to divulge it. This is the second element which is "inherited" by the rhetoric concessive *pravda*, as well as, partly, by the speech meaning *pravda 1.2.* (cf. *trudno govorit' pravdu* 'it is difficult to speak the truth', *nevozmozhno vyrvat' u nego pravdu* 'it is impossible to get the truth from him'). Concession as a rhetoric strategy dates back to Latin grammars where it was viewed not as a meaning or a group of meanings verbalized in certain words and expressions, but rather as a special figure of speech in which the speaker seemingly *admits* the point of view of his/her opponent, yet seeks to advance his/her own point of view. Thus, Diderot's "Encyclopedie" gives the following definition to concession (Diderot: 804, in my translation): "Concession: a figure of speech whereby the orator, sure of his own right, outwardly partly agrees with his opponent in order to gain advantage or to thwart unnecessary objections by which he could be stopped".

This semantic continuity between the noun *pravda 1.1*, as in *skryvat' pravdu* 'to conceal the truth' and the concessive conjunction *pravda 4.3*, as in *On xoroshij paren', **pravda** vypivaet* 'He's a good guy **though admittedly** he drinks too much' can be further emphasized by juxtaposing their definitions. Let us recall the definition of *pravda 4.3*:

A1, pravda, A2 'A1 though A2' = 'A1 is taking place; A2 is taking place; the speaker admits that A2 makes A1 less important; the speaker thinks A1 is slightly more important that A2'.

The speaker admits the importance of a certain aspect of the existing situation but still insists that another aspect of the existing situation is more important for its overall evaluation. The component 'to admit' is inherited from *pravda 1.1*.

In other respects though, *pravda 4.3* can be traced back to the speech meaning *pravda 1.2.* and the particle meaning *pravda 4.1* (as in *On otkazalsja, pravda?* 'He refused, didn't he?'), since *pravda 4.3* as well as *pravda 1.2* and *pravda 4.1*, involves an evaluation of a certain proposi-

tion or utterance as consistent with reality.

There is an additional question as to how a single noun, not part of a prepositional phrase, had become a conjunction – not a very common way of syntactic development for Russian, where the majority of complex conjunctions come from fossilized verbal forms (*ne smotria na* 'in spite of', lit. 'not regarding') or else prepositional phrases with pronouns or, rarely nouns (*mezhdu tem kak* 'while', lit. 'among that-INSTR how', *v silu togo chto* 'because', lit. 'in the force that-GEN this'). Syntactically, again, it is the second meaning of *pravda*, which in its predicative usages provides the necessary link to the grammatical, functional meanings of 'pravda' and, ultimately, to the conjunction meaning.

Admittedly, this kind of semantic development from 'truth' to a concessive conjunction is not unique to Russian. Latin had it in some form; according to the Oxford Latin Dictionary, the Latin particle *uero* (*vero*) had meanings ranging from 'in accordance with truth, honestly', 'unquestionably' to rhetorically charged adversatives such as 'on the other hand' or even stronger ones as 'however, yet', as in

(14) *Hoc dicendi genus ad patrocinia mediocriter aptum uidebatur, ad senatoriam **uero** sententiam... uel maxime* (Cic. Brut., 112)
'This type of eloquence seems not quite adequate for attorney's speeches **but** for senatorial speeches is the best'

(15) *Iuno quidem cum Minerua tristes... e scaena redeunt... Venus **uero** gaudens* (Apul. Met.10.34)
'Juno and Minerva leave the stage unhappy **but** Venus is laughing'

This adversative or concessive meaning seems to have been inherited by some Romance languages, such as Spanish (*la verdad es que* – 'although; lit. the truth is that'). However, the fact that this semantic development is typologically valid, makes one wonder all the more, as to what it is in the semantics of truth, that gives rise to the semantics of adversity and concession.

This tendency can be generalized. Many words with the primary meaning of correspondence to reality and agreement, such as *konechno* 'of course', the English *sure*, *tak* 'so', *da* 'yes', *ladno* 'let', *pust'* 'let' develop contrastive and/or concessive meanings or usages. Paradoxical though it may sound, there seem to be some polemical connotations in the very semantics of agreement. Or perhaps, in the same way as *pravda* is contrasted to *nepravda, truth* is contrasted to *a lie*, agreement inherently hints to disagreement, which creates the necessary semantic background for the development of contrastive and concessive meanings whose main rhetorical function is argument.

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