Predicting Aspect Choice in Russian on Compositional Grounds

It is notoriously difficult to come up with a systematic compositional account to the distribution of the two aspects in Russian. The root of the problem is that in Russian, reference to a single completed event is not the exclusive territory of the perfective, as one might expect. Under certain circumstances also the imperfective can be used in that function. Groundbreaking was the 2004 dissertation of Atle Grønn, which builds on the idea that the two aspectual operators, PF and IPF, apply to VP meanings that are structured into background and focus information (triggered by intonation and word order). Grønn indeed manages to derive the actual distribution of the two aspects in a systematic way, and still there are some empirical data that escape his approach.
In the talk I will, first, introduce the challenge raised by "perfective imperfectives" in Russian. I will, second, explain the theory developed in Grønn (2004) and point to some empirical shortcomings. Third, I will propose a modification of Grønn's approach, after which, as far as I can see, the critical data fall into place.