Selected Topics in Slavic linguistics

Slavic languages are sufficiently similar and sufficiently different to provide an attractive research laboratory. (Corbett 1998)

Introducing "Slavic-style" aspect

- Grammatical system expressing the "different ways of viewing the internal temporal constituency of a situation" (Comrie 1976:3)

- Languages differ as to

  - which (if at all) aspectual meanings are **grammaticalised**,

  - which of them form **oppositions** and which are **grouped** together,

  - and how they are **expressed**.

(Comrie 1976, Maslov 1984, Dahl 1985, Smith 1991/1997, Bybee et al. 1994, Boland 2006 etc.)

- "Two-component" theory of aspect:

  - **Viewpoint**: particular ways in which the speaker construes the situation and relates it to other situations in the discourse.

  - **Actionality**: partly lexically encoded and partly syntactically determined linguistic categorisation of situations.

(Maslov 1984, Smith 1991/1997, Breu 1994, Bertinetto & Delfitto 2000, Tatevosov 2002, 2015, 2016)

Introducing "Slavic-style" aspect

- <u>Actionality</u>: categorisation of situations as

  - static vs. dynamic

  - durative vs. punctual

  - **telic** vs. **atelic**

- <u>Viewpoint</u>: roughly, construal of situations as

  - **perfective** (bounded, included into the reference time)

  - **imperfective** (unbounded, overlapping with the reference time).

  (Smith 1991/1997, Klein 1994)

- E.g. intersection of actionality and viewpoint aspect in English and Russian:

	perfective	imperfective
telic	*John read the book* *Ivan pročital knigu*	*John was reading the book* *Ivan čital knigu*
Atelic	*John slept* *Ivan pospal*	*John was sleeping* *Ivan spal*

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- Shared characteristics:

  - "perfective" and "imperfective" are not part of the inflectional system but rather (productive) **derivational** categories

  - most simplex verbs are **imperfective** (<u>atelic</u> events (processes, states)

  - **perfective** verbs (culminations of <u>telic</u> processes) are derived from simplex verbs by means of prefixes (**preverbs**).

- Slavic preverbs go back to the Proto-Indo-European verbal satellites

  - common **grammaticalisation pattern**:
    "spatial preverb" → "Aktionsart preverb" →"perfectivising preverb"

  - the use of preverbs for perfectivisation is relatively recent innovation

  (Wiemer & Seržant 2017)

Introducing "Slavic-style" aspect

bounder-based perfectives (Slavic)	anterior-based perfectives (Romance)
go back to combinations of verbs with adverbial elements	go back to resultative-perfect constructions
tend to be derivational	tend to be inflectional
show lexical idiosyncrasies and often add meanings other than perfective	tend to be semantically compositional
emphasize completion of the event and not just temporal boundedness	express temporal boundedness of an event

- <u>Bounder-based perfectives</u> themselves constitute a subtype of aspectual systems called **derivational** (Dahl 1985) or **verb-classifying** (Plungian 2011).

Introducing "Slavic-style" aspect

- In **derivational** aspectual systems:

  - aspectual interpretation is an inherent property of the verbal lexeme;

  - in order to apply a different viewpoint to the same situation,
    a new verb has to be derived by morphological means.

- Being a separate lexeme, an **aspectual derivate** displays a full verbal paradigm,
  and not just some particular form or forms.

- In the Slavic languages aspectual categories have been considered to be
  grammaticalised to the greatest extent:

  - secondary imperfectivisation alongside perfectivisation (→ obligatoriness
    and paradigmaticisation of the aspectual opposition)

  - "empty prefixes" (→ "semantic bleaching")

Introducing "Slavic-style" aspect

- Secondary imperfectivisation in Russian:

  - *pisat'*$_{\text{IPF}}$ 'write'

    → **pod***pisat'*$_{\text{PFV}}$ 'sign' (lit. underwrite)

    → **pod***pis**yva**t'*$_{\text{IPF}}$ 'sign'

  - *pit'*$_{\text{IPF}}$ 'drink'

    → **vy***pit'*$_{\text{PFV}}$ 'drink (completely)' (lit. out-drink)

    → **vy***piv**a**t'*$_{\text{IPF}}$ '(repeatedly) drink (completely)'

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● "Empty" prefixes (apparently) only induce perfective interpretation of the verb:

	Imperfective	Perfective	
'write'	*pisat'*	**na**pisat'	"on-write"
'dig'	*kopat'*	**vy**kopat'	"out-dig"
'hide'	*prjatat'*	**s**prjatat'	"off-hide"
'load'	*gruzit'*	**za**gruzit'	"behind-load"
'whiten'	*belet'*	**po**belet'	"over-whiten"

Introducing "Slavic-style" aspect

- Recap

  - Systematic distinction perfective vs. imperfective aspect

  - A given verb is, in itself, either perfective or imperfective

  - There are pairs of verbs, corresponding to each other in meaning, except that one expresses perfective aspect and the other imperfective

A metaphor in search of a source domain: The categories of Slavic aspect*

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https://www.uttv.ee/naita?id=25910&keel=eng

Abstract

I propose that human experience of matter provides the source domain for the metaphor that motivates the grammatical category of aspect in Russian. This model is a version of the universal TIME IS SPACE metaphor, according to which SITUATIONS ARE MATERIAL ENTITIES, and, more specifically, PERFECTIVE IS A DISCRETE SOLID OBJECT versus IMPERFECTIVE IS A FLUID SUBSTANCE. The contrast of discrete solid objects with fluid sub-