

Aspect and finiteness

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Points of departure & research questions

- **Cross-Slavic** differences in the use of aspect in various contexts: **Czech vs. Russian**
- Czech Aspect fulfils its full functional potential in both **finite** and **non-finite** contexts, Russian Aspect only in finite ones.
 - Sequence of event readings
 - Nominalisations
 - **New empirical domain:** (Past) passive participles in participial passives

⇒ What is the connection between Aspect and finiteness?

⇒ Why is it more crucial for Russian Aspect than for Czech Aspect?

(work in progress)

Cross-Slavic variation in aspect

Some aspectual differences: Czech vs. Russian

(Eckert 1984; Stunová 1993; Dickey 2000; Gehrke 2002; Dübbers 2015, ...)

| | Czech | Russian |
|--|--------------|---------------------|
| Sequences of single events (past) | IPFV, PFV | (almost excl.) PFV |
| Iterativity, habituality (past, present) | IPFV, PFV | (almost excl.) IPFV |
| Historical Present | IPFV, PFV | (almost excl.) IPFV |
| Running instructions & commentaries | IPFV, PFV | (almost excl.) IPFV |

(see Gehrke 2022, 2023, and more references cited therein)

“Slavic East-West Division”, after Dickey (2015)

| | WEST: Czech, Slovak, Sorbian, Slovene | EAST: Russian, Ukrainian, Belarusian |
|------------------------------------|---|--|
| Functional scope of PFV | maximal | minimal |
| IPFV general-factual | minimal usage | maximal usage |
| Productive delimitative <i>po-</i> | no | yes |
| Productive distributive <i>po-</i> | yes | no |
| Préverbe vide | <i>s-/z-</i> | <i>po-</i> |

(Transitional zones or some deviations: BCMS vs. Polish vs. Bulgarian, Macedonian)

Czech vs. Russian: The potential role of finiteness

Sequence of events

Deverbal nominalisations

Past passive participles

Sequence of events (SOE) (Gehrke 2022, 2023)

- **Russian**

- Finite verb forms for SOE interpretation (PFV for single events, IPFV for habitual events)
- Non-finite verb forms to avoid SOE interpretation (with either single or habitual events)

- **Czech**

- The distinction between finite and non-finite verb forms is not relevant for the SOE interpretation or the avoidance thereof.
- Both verb forms (and both aspects) allow for either reading, depending on the overall context and also verb type.
 - IPFV: with states, activities or when dwelling on the duration/process of accomplishment
 - PFV: with accomplishments and achievements (and no dwelling on duration/process)

Sequences of single events (Gehrke 2022, 2023)

- (1) On **po-molčal** nekotoree vremja v smjatenii, **vsmatrivajas'** v
 he PO-was-silent.PFV some time in confusion watch.AP.SI in
 lunu, plyvuščuju za rešetkoj, i **za-govoril:** [...]
 moon.ACC swimming.ACC behind bars and ZA-spoke.PFV
 'He was silent for a while, confused, watching the moon swimming behind the
 bars, and said: ...' (Russian)
- (2) Chvíli zaraženě **mĺčel,** **sledoval** plující
 while.ACC confused.ADV was-silent.IPFV followed.IPFV swimming.ACC
 měsíc za mřící, a **pak se zeptal:** [...]
 moon.ACC behind bars and then REFL inquired.PFV
 'He was confusedly silent, follows the moon swimming behind the bars, and then
 inquired: ...' (Czech)

Habitual SOE (ex. from Gehrke 2023)

- (3) Mnogie iz 30 tysjač mexaničeskix ěkipažej, **begavšie** v 28-m godu many.NOM of 30 thousand mechanical wagons run.PAP.DET.IPFV in 28th year po Moskve, **proskakivali** po ulice Gercena, **šurša** along Moscow.PREP through-jumped.SI along street.PREP Gercen.GEN rustle.AP.IPFV po gladjkim torcam, i čerez každyju minutu s gulom i skrežetom over smooth pavement and through every minute with roaring and crunching **skatyvalsja** s Gercena k Moxovoj tramvaj 16, 22, 48 ili down-rolled.REFL.SI from Gercen.GEN to Moxovaja.DAT tram.NOM 16, 22, 48 or 53-go maršruta. [RU]
53th-GEN line.GEN
- (4) Mnohé z třiceti tisíc drožek, které v osmadvacátém many.NOM out thirty.GEN thousand.GEN carriages.GEN which in 28th **jezdily** po Moskvě, **proklouzly** Gercenovou ulicí a **zasvištěly** drove.INDET.IPFV along Moscow through-slid.PFV Gercen.ADJ street and swished.PFV na hladkém dřevěném dláždění; každou minutu se s řinkotem a on smooth wooden pavement every.ACC minute.ACC REFL with rattling and skřípěním **přehнала** od Gercenovy ulice k Mechové tramvaj číslo crunching past-chased.PFV from Gercen street to Mechová tram.NOM number 16, 22, 48 nebo 53. [CZ]
16, 22, 48 or 53

Deverbal nominalisations (Dickey 2000)

- **Czech**

- True aspectual pairs
- Aspects contribute essentially the same meanings as with finite verb forms (e.g. IPFV ongoing vs. PFV completed event)

- **Russian** (see also Schoorlemmer 1998; Pazelskaya 2012)

- nominalisation from one or the other aspectual partner
- no predictable aspectual meaning

(5) e.g. 'realise, execute' > 'realisation, execution'

a. pfv. provést / ipfv. provádět
> pfv. provedení / ipfv. provádění (Czech)

b. pfv. osuščestvit' / ipfv. osuščestvljat'
> osuščestvlenie/*osuščestvľanie (Russian)

(examples after Dickey 2000, ch. 9)

Predicative (past) passive participles in -n/t (PPPs)

- **Russian**

- regularly derived from PFVs (transitive, no external prefixes)
- severe restrictions on IPFVs:
 - no secondary imperfectives, no ongoing reading (Knjazev 2007; Borik and Gehrke 2018; Wiemer et al. 2023)
 - possibly only factual readings (Borik and Gehrke 2018)

- **Czech**

- Gehrke (2023): Data discussed in Karlík (2017), tested for aspect interchangeability and (I)PFV readings
- PPPs derived from both aspects, predictable aspect meaning

Russian participial passive

(6) Storož {otkryval / otkryl} vorota.
 watchman.NOM opened.SI opened.PFV gates.ACC
 'A/The watchman was opening/opened a/the gate.'

a. Vorota byli otkryty storožem.
 gates.NOM were open.PFV.PPP watchman.INSTR
 'A/The gate was opened by a/the watchman.'

b. *Vorota byli otkryvany storožem.
 gates.NOM were open.SI.PPP watchman.INSTR

(7) **Factual IPFV PPPs** (Borik and Gehrke 2018)

a. Bylo pito, bylo edeno, byli slezy
 was drink.IPFV.PPP.N.SG was eat.IPFV.PPP.N.SG were tears
 proliity.
 pour.PFV.PPP.PL
 '(Things) were drunk, (things) were eaten, tears were shed.' **EXISTENTIAL**

b. Pisano èto bylo Dostoevskim v 1871 godu [...]
 write.IPFV.PPP.N.SG that was Dostoevskij.INSTR in 1871 year
 'That was written by Dostoevskij in 1871.' **PRESUPPOSITIONAL**

Czech participial passive: activity + present tense BE(.FREQ)

(8) Žák je chválen (učitelem). (Karlík 2017)
 student.NOM is praise.IPFV.PPP teacher.INSTR

- Czech consultants

- IPFV PPP: ongoing or regular reading
- interchangeable with PFV PPP (same readings) (9-a)
- habitual reading with frequentative suffix on BE and either PPP (9-b,c)

(9) a. Žák je pochválen (učitelem).
 student.NOM is praise.PFV.PPP teacher.INSTR

b. Žák bývá chválen (učitelem).
 student.NOM is.FREQ praise.IPFV.PPP teacher.INSTR

c. Žák bývá pochválen (učitelem).
 student.NOM is.FREQ praise.PFV.PPP teacher.INSTR

Czech participial passive: achievement + past tense BE(.FREQ)

(10) O tom bylo rozhodnuto (delegáty) včera.
 about that was decide.PFV.PPP delegates.INSTR yesterday
 (Karlík 2017)

- Czech consultants
 - PFV PPP:
 - completed reading
 - odd with *často* 'often', but fully acceptable with the frequently marked auxiliary *bývalo* + *často*
 - IPFV *rozhodovano*:
 - There was some deliberation but it was not finished.
 - With *často*, a habitual reading is also possible, with or without *bývalo*.

Czech participial passive: verb of creation + present/past tense BE(.FREQ)

(11) Škola je stavěna (zedníky). (Karlík 2017)
 school.NOM is build.IPFV.PPP mason.INSTR.PL

- Czech consultants
 - IPFV PPP + present/past tense BE: ongoing reading (with plural subject also habitual possible)
 - PFV PPP + present tense BE: job-done reading
 - PFV PPP + past tense BE: 'completed' reading
 - frequentative BE + PFV PPP (*bývá postavena*): odd with singular 'school', ok with plural subject (school buildings are regularly finished)

Czech participial passive: verb of creation + present tense BE(.FREQ)

(12) Je psána stížnost. (Karlík 2017)
is write.IPFV.PPP complaint

- Czech consultants
 - IPFV: regular or ongoing interpretation
 - PFV *je napsána*: finished-reading (the job is done)
 - Frequentative BE in combination with a PFV PPP (*bývá napsána*) is slightly odd but with the right context one could get the reading that events of this type are regularly finished.

(word order?)

Czech participial passive: summary

- Unlike in Russian, Czech PPPs are derived from both aspects, with predictable aspect meaning (+ adjectival passive reading).
(same conclusion for reflexive passive; see Gehrke 2023)
 - Additional factors that play a role: verb class, tense on the auxiliary, additional adverbials, (word order?)
- The same factors play a role in other contexts (finite or non-finite).

SOE: active vs. passive (Russian)

- **Schoorlemmer (1995, 257f.) on Russian:**

- The obligatory SOE interpretation we find in the active (13-a) disappears with periphrastic passives (13-b).
- Since PPPs are resultative (“Perfect Effect”) we only get three events completed at some time before S; the precise order in which these happened or whether they happened simultaneously is not specified.

- (13) a. Maša vymyla posudu, nalila čaj i pozvala
 Maša.NOM washed.PFV dishes.ACC poured.PFV tea.ACC and called.PFV
 sem’ju.
 family.ACC
 ‘Maša did the dishes, (then) poured tea, and (then) called her family.’
- b. Mašej byla vymyta posuda, nalit čaj i
 Maša.INSTR was wash.PFV.PPP dishes.NOM pour.PFV.PPP tea.NOM and
 pozvana sem’ja.
 called.PFV family.NOM
 ‘The dishes were washed, the tea poured, and the family called by Maša.’

SOE: active vs. passive (Czech)

- The SOE interpretation is just one possible interpretation of either active or passive (depending on the context and on world knowledge) (Denisa Lenertová, Radek Šimík, p.c.).
- There is no substantial difference between finite and non-finite forms. (This is in line with the general trend we already saw above: SOE readings in Czech are contextually conditioned.)

- (14)
- a. Marta vyplnila žádost, zaplatila zdravotní pojištění
 Marta.NOM in-filled.PFV form.ACC paid.PFV health-insurance-policy.ACC
 a koupila jízdenky.
 and bought.PFV tickets.ACC
 'Marta filled in a/the form, paid for a/the health insurance policy and bought (the) tickets.'
- b. Koordinátorkou byla vyplněna žádost, zaplaceno
 coordinator.INSTR was in-fill.PFV.PPP form.NOM pay.PFV.PPP
 zdravotní pojištění a koupeny jízdenky.
 health-insurance-policy.NOM and buy.PFV.PPP tickets.NOM
 'A/The form was filled in, a/the health insurance policy was paid, and (the) tickets were bought by the coordinator.'

Interim summary

| | Czech | Russian |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|---|
| SOE | contextual | finite, active (I)PFV |
| Nominalisations | PFV, IPFV | “aspectually neutral” (Dickey 2000) |
| PPPs | PFV, IPFV all ipfv meanings | predominantly PFV forms only factual IPFVs |

- In Czech, Aspect fulfils its full functional potential in both the finite and non-finite domain.
 - In Russian, Aspect is not fully functional in the non-finite domain.
- There is a closer connection between Aspect and finiteness in Russian than in Czech.

Finiteness

Why finiteness? Or rather Tense?

- **Standard assumptions**

- Finiteness in T: Tense, person/number agreement with subject (e.g. Pitsch 2015)
- Tense/TP: Relation between R and S
- Aspect/AspP: Relation between E and R (e.g. Reichenbach 1947; Klein 1995)

But ...

- Cable (2013) on Gĩkũyũ: Temporal remoteness morphemes in Gĩkũyũ have a tense semantics but directly restrict E, rather than R.
- Lin (2006) on Chinese: No TP
Features typically associated with temporal information are located in Asp.
- **Todorović (2016) on Slavic**, except for Bulgarian, Macedonian:
 - In the absence of true tense morphology, there is no TP (analogy to lack of DP).
 - Tense semantics can be derived from inner/outer aspect & modals.
 - (No consensus about “finiteness”)

Existing accounts of cross-Slavic aspect: (Some notion of) temporal definiteness

e.g. Klimek-Jankowska (2022): Definiteness of R wrt E or S

- PFVs introduce a definite [or specific?] reference time point (following Ramchand 2004, 2008).
- The verb form competes for insertion either in AspP or TP.
- A speaker can choose whether the reference point is definite/specific with respect to the temporal trace of the event (as in Ramchand's 2004; 2008 account), or definite with respect to S.
 - Russian, Eastern Polish (preference): R is definite/specific wrt S
 - Czech, Western Polish (preference): R is definite/specific wrt E

→ This makes Russian aspect more like a Tense (a relation between R and S).

(Further accounts that employ some notion of temporal definiteness: Dickey 2000; Mueller-Reichau 2018, to appear)

Reinhart (1986, 2000) on English

- ① $E \subseteq R$ by default (PROG reverses this)
- ② S-E: sentence's truth conditions & temporal interpretation
- ③ S-R: perspective & tense morphology
 - Speaker at S is 'inside' the relevance domain R (present perfect) or not
 - e.g. past: $R < S$ / present: $S \cap R \neq \emptyset$

Borik (2006) applies this system to Russian, with some adjustments

- ① $E \subseteq R$ is fixed
- ② S-E: temporal interpretation & tense morphology
- ③ S-R: aspect
 - PFV: $S \cap R = \emptyset$ & $E \subseteq R$
 - IPFV: $\neg(S \cap R = \emptyset \ \& \ E \subseteq R)$
in other words: $S \cap R \neq \emptyset \vee E \not\subseteq R$

Borik (2018): This might only hold for the Russian past tense; speculation about a possible connection to the diachrony of *l*-participles ...

Diachronic development of *I*-participles: Russian (vs. Polish) vs. Czech

Migdalski (2005)

- **Slavic I-participle**

- Initially part of a periphrastic perfect tense (present/past/future perfect) [*and of other periphrastic verb forms that I will not go into here*]
- The only “past tense” form in e.g. Czech, Polish, Russian
- Reanalysis as the default tense for describing past events

- **Russian**

- Increased usage of present perfect in Old Church Russian (earlier than in Old Church Slavonic)
- Auxiliary started to be left out in the 11th century
- Auxiliary drop becomes the norm in the 12th/13th century
- Decline of the Imperfectum: 13th century
- Decline of the Aorist: 15th/16th century

Migdalski (2005) (cont.)

• Polish

- Loss of aorist/imperfectum: 14th century
- Reduced forms of the auxiliary extend to the whole paradigm
- Reanalysis of the auxiliary following the *l*-participle as an affix (continues in Modern Polish, not completed)
- Second strategy in Modern Polish: Auxiliary as a second position clitic when it encliticises onto an element that has been moved to the clause-initial position (focus or topicalisation)
- *l*-participle is the head of the VP, undergoes head movement to T to left-adjoin to the perfect auxiliary in T
- (Other auxiliaries are lower, in Aux, above VP)

• Czech

- Loss of aorist/imperfectum: 14th century
- Reduction of the auxiliary into a clitic, but still separate from the *l*-participle
- Fronted *l*-participles involve predicate inversion (phrasal movement), as in South Slavic (but not in Polish)

Some speculations

- **Czech** *I*-participles stay low (VP/AspP). (unless there is predicate inversion)
 - Tense and Aspect fulfil their duties independently from one another.
- **Russian** *I*-participles are synthetic verb forms and always move to T.
 - Tense and Aspect are more intertwined and together contribute to the overall temporal-aspectual interpretation.

(Potential problem: Arguments that the *I*-participle does not move higher than AspP in Bailyn 1995; Gribanova 2013)

- **Participial passives**
 - Work the same in Czech
 - Different in Russian: There is an auxiliary now, so the participle stays low. (hypothesis in Borik 2006: absence of SOE due to IPFV auxiliary)
- Even more speculations about the intermediate position of **Polish** wrt aspectual differences: Participles can stay low but can also move up to left-adjoin to the auxiliary in T.

Conclusion

Summary

- **Differences between Czech and Russian:** Sequence-of-events readings, nominalisations, participial passives
 - In Czech, Aspect fulfils its full functional potential in both the finite and non-finite domain.
 - In Russian, Aspect is not fully functional in the non-finite domain.
 - There is a closer connection between Aspect and finiteness OR between Aspect and Tense in Russian than in Czech.
- **Speculations about the source of this difference:** Different diachronic developments of Czech and Russian “past tense” forms
 - Czech: Auxiliary in T (Tense) + /-participle in Asp
 - Clear separation of Tense and Aspect
 - Russian: Only one form, in T
 - Tense and Aspect cannot be separated.

Open issues

- This is highly speculative and needs to be worked out (morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics).
- What about present tense forms? (see also Borik 2018)
- What about infinitives?

Thank you!

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Existing accounts: Definiteness

- **Dickey (2000): different (I)PFV semantics**
 - West: PFV Totality / IPFV quantitative temporal indefiniteness
 - East: PFV Temporal definiteness / IPFV qualitative temporal indefiniteness
- **Mueller-Reichau (2018): different PFV semantics**
 - Czech, Polish: Event uniqueness
 - Russian: Event uniqueness + target state validity
- **Mueller-Reichau (to appear): different PFV semantics**
 - Colloquial Upper Sorbian: Determinate event path
 - Czech: Determinate event path + end of E included in R
 - Russian: Determinate event path + end of E included in R + target state validity

(underspecified IPFV semantics: E and R temporally overlap)

Refinement in Borik (2018)

- Point of departure: When does the English perfect correspond to Russian IPFV, when to Russian PFV?
 - Progressive perfects in all tenses ~ IPFV
 - Present and past perfects ~ IPFV or PFV past tense forms
 - Future perfects ~ IPFV non-past forms

→ Borik's (2018) proposal

- The temporal relation expressed by Tense morphology in Russian past tense forms differs from that in non-past tense forms.
- Past: relation between E and S, whereby the position of R remains underspecified (building on Borik 2002, 2006).
- Non-past: relation between R and S, as commonly assumed for Tense cross-linguistically.

Borik (2018): Diachronic speculation

- Russian *l*-participle
 - the only past tense form in contemporary Russian
 - Old Russian resultative participle + auxiliary 'be' ~ present perfect (see also discussion in Migdalski 2005)
initially less used than Aorist & Imperfect, only resultative meaning
 - 12th century: increased use of the *l*-participle & first cases of auxiliary omission
 - (15t/16th century: loss of Aorist & Imperfect)
- Borik's (2018) speculations
 - function of the auxiliary: to build a connection to the present moment
 - this connection gets lost due to auxiliary omission → *l*-participle gets shifted to report on an eventuality that occurred in the past

Are I-participles (“past tense” forms) finite?

- No person/number agreement but gender/number agreement
- Pitsch (2015); Todorović (2016) (for (North) Slavic):
 - I-participles are non-finite.
 - Finiteness comes from the (c)overt BE-auxiliary.
- **What if:** This is only true for Czech (and maybe Serbian ...) but not for Russian?
 - Reanalysis of the Russian I-participles as finite past tense forms, which are then in T?
- BUT** Gribanova (2013): Verbs move as high as Asp, but not as high as T (see arguments in Bailyn 1995)

Is there a TP / tense morphology in Slavic?

- **Todorović (2016)**

- There is no TP in Slavic (except Bulgarian, Macedonian).
- Tense semantics can be derived from inner/outer aspect & modals.

Her arguments:

- Finiteness mismatches in VP-ellipsis (but no aspectual mismatches)
- Tense morphology
 - Dedicated tense morphology only in Bg/Mcd., but not in, e.g., Serbian
 - Russian counterparts look like Bulgarian, but are reanalysed as agreement markers
- (see also Migdalski 2013; Jung and Migdalski 2015; Pitsch 2015)
- “Present/past” tense forms also appear in non-present/past contexts.
 - /-participle in Polish, Slovene in the periphrastic Future
 - /-participle generally in subjunctives/conjunctives
 - Serbian “present tense” forms in subordinate clauses & conditionals
- Aorist/Imperfect
 - Aspects in Serbian (restricted to (I)PFV verb forms)
 - Tenses in Bulgarian (not restricted)

Is there a TP / tense morphology in Slavic?

- (15) **Bulgarian** (table from Todorović 2016, 249)
 stem + tense suffix + agreement suffix; e.g. present tense:

| Stem /tʃɛŋ/ 'read' | Underlying form | Surface form |
|--------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| 2sg | /tʃɛ'ŋ+ɛ+j/ | /tʃɛ'ŋj/ |
| 3sg | /tʃɛ'ŋ+ɛ/ | /tʃɛ'ŋɛ/ |
| 1pl | /tʃɛ'ŋ+ɛ+m/ | /tʃɛ'ŋɛm/ |
| 2pl | /tʃɛ'ŋ+ɛ+tʃɛ/ | /tʃɛ'ŋɛtʃɛ/ |

(1st.sg/3rd.pl less transparent [other conjugation classes neither])

- (16) **Serbian** [Czech would look similar]
 stem (+ thematic vowel *a/i/e*) + agreement suffix
 e.g. 'sleep': spava-m, spava-š, spava-∅, spava-mo, spava-te, spava-ju

- (17) **Russian** (looks more like Bulgarian)
- čit-a-e(-)š', čit-a-e(-)t, čit-a-e(-)m, čit-a-e(-)te
 - govor-i-š', govor-i-t, govor-i-m, govor-i-te

'read'

'say'

Is there a TP / tense morphology in Slavic?

- **What if:** Russian is different, there is TP/tense morphology?
- Todorović's arguments from tense forms in other temporal contexts less convincing for Russian
 - /-participle plus conjunctive marker, but in all other contexts past tense
 - Tense forms with different tense semantics also in languages that are assumed to have tense morphology/TP
 - (PFV) present tense with future reference & present tense forms in historical present
 - Past tense forms without past tense semantics: English *if*-clauses ...

(if her proposal were “right” I would expect more freedom in temporal interpretation, like in, e.g., Chinese ...)

Yet some more speculation

- Possibility that differences with **external/superlexical prefixes** are connected to this.
 - (Some) Russian external prefixes are Asp heads/in the temporal domain, most Czech ones are not, but are lower? (e.g. delimitative *po-*, ingressive *za-*)
 - (see also arguments in Žaucer 2009; Biskup 2019; Milosavljević 2023 that (at least some) “external” prefixes behave more like internal or at least lower ones in Slovenian, Czech, Serbian, respectively)
- One instance of **Czech *po-*** (on present tensed determinate motion verbs) is even higher, as it got reanalysed as a Tense head ... (Biskup 2019)