

Primary and secondary imperfectivization under contact conditions: the case of Molise Slavic in Italy

Molise Slavic (MSL) is a south-Slavic minority language in southern Italy (Region of Molise, three villages with different dialects). It belongs to the Serbo-Croatian (BCMSx) language continuum, based on the Štokavian-Ikavian dialect group. It has been in a situation of language contact since the immigration of the ancestors of today's Molise Slavs in the 16th century, as is demonstrated by historical documents and the diachronic characteristics of the language.

In principle, MSL has preserved the traditional double aspect system, with the Slavic-style opposition of perfectivity expressed by grammatical affixes and the morphosyntactic opposition of imperfect and *L*-perfect. Both categories freely combine, with IPFV.PRF, PFV.IPRF etc. In contrast to Croatian, the imperfect can never be replaced by the perfect, whereas the functions of the former aorist have been completely absorbed by the latter. All developments in the domain of the morphosyntactic opposition, violating in part diachronic constants of Slavic, correspond to the local Italian model, which has been calqued (Broj 2006). The opposition of perfectivity, has been kept in spite of its absence in Italian, which has deeply influenced MSL in many other respects, by inducing new grammatical categories (e.g. an article system), but also mergers of existing oppositions, like the syncretism of the locative with the accusative.

Secondary imperfectivization is restricted to the inherited lexicon, for the simple reason that newly borrowed verbs do not form perfectives by means of prefixes. Nevertheless, all loan verbs perfectly integrate into the existing system of aspectual pairs: In contrast to other Slavic languages, including Russian and Croatian, all telic source verbs enter the minority language as perfectives and automatically form an imperfective partner by means of the imperfectivizing suffix *-(i)va*, e.g. It. *permettere* 'to promise' → MSL *primitit* PFV / *primičivat* IPFV, It. *fermare* 'to stop' → *fermat* PFV / *fermivat* IPFV (primary imperfectivization).

Apart from the more frequent aspectual pairs of an imperfective simplex and a perfective prefixed verb, like *krest* / *ukrest* IPFV/PFV 'to steal', the inherited lexicon continues to have aspectual pairs formed by prefixed perfectives and secondary imperfectives, suffixed with *-iva*, *-ova*, *-va* and *-a*. Examples are *ureč* / *urečivat* 'to bewitch', *potepst* / *potepovat* 'to stumble', *dodat* / *dodavat* 'to hand over', *ubost* / *ubodat* 'to sting', *sa domislit* / *sa domisljat* 'to notice'. Interestingly, the suffix *-iva* is rare in aspectual pairs with prefixed perfectives, but relatively frequent in aspectual triples like *budit* / *probudit* / *probudivat* IPFV₁/PFV/IPFV₂ 'to wake' and in pairs with *n*-suffixed perfectives like *seknit* / *seknjivat* PFV/IPFV 'to blow one's nose', having in part also an additional prefix: *zvrnit* / *zvrnjivat* PFV/IPFV 'to knock over'.

Another example of such an aspectual triple is *kratnit* / *skratnjit* / *skratnjivat* IPFV₁/PFV/IPFV₂ 'to shorten'. Here, the secondary imperfective *skratnjivat* is used more frequently, to the detriment of the simplex *kratnit* IPFV, having become even obsolete for some speakers. In contrast, the simplex *buč* IPFV₁ 'to dress', in direct aspectual correlation with *obuč* PFV, is much more frequent than its competitor *bučivat* IPFV₂. Note that this is, in addition, a case of de-prefixation, not rare for perfectives with the prefix *o-* in Molise Slavic; see also *otvorit* / *tvorivat* PFV/IPFV 'to open', here even with a de-prefixed perfective variant *tvorit* PFV 'to open'. While there is no **otvarivat*, the competing imperfective suffix *-a* is possible in the secondary imperfectivizations *otvorat* ~ *otvarat*, both of them variants of *tvorivat*, without any clear difference in usage.

Several suffixed imperfectives do not have an overt perfective partner. Examples of such "orphan" derivations with only virtual partners seem to belong exclusively to the domain of borrowings, for example, *badivat* IPFV 'to care' ← It. *badare*, *notivat* IPFV 'to swim' ← It. *nuotare*, *kumbinivat* IPFV 'to border' ← It. *confinare*. In cases like this, the reason for the derivational form seems to be a homonymy conflict with verbs of other lexical meanings, either

imperfective ones like *badat* IPFV ‘to touch’ or perfectives like *notat* PFV ‘to note’ ← It. *notare*, *kumbinat* PFV ‘to combine’ ← It. *combinare*. In the second case the perfective verbs form a pair with derived imperfectives, here *notivat*, *kumbinivat*, which, actually, have not been blocked, in spite of the emerging homonymy. There are also cases like *rospivat* IPFV ‘to swallow the toad’, where *-iva* is used for word formation, as this verb has no direct source form in Italian, but is derived “interlinguistically” from It. *rospo* ‘toad’ (which itself has not been borrowed). A pseudo *iva*-formation is *gorivat* IPFV ‘to speak’, a “deformation” of its less frequent variant *govorat*.

The aspectual class of the lexeme in question plays a role for the meaning of derived imperfectives. As usual, for accomplishments iterative and processual meaning are both characteristic, whereas achievements exclude processual meaning. Two-phase lexemes (incorporatives in the ILA model; s. Breu 2021), play a special role. For example, in the pair *hranit* / *hranjivat* PFV/IPFV ‘to hide’, the *iva*-imperfective expresses both the process of “running to the hiding place” and the state of “being in the hiding place” (besides iteration). In MSL, in contrast to Russian, positional verbs belong to this class, e.g. *sist* / *sidit* PFV/IPFV ‘to sit’, with the imperfective partner expressing both the state of ‘sitting’ and the process of ‘sitting’ down. Here we find in some cases aspectual triples with a static simplex and a dynamic secondary imperfective, e.g. *klečat* / *kleknit* / *kleknjivat* IPFV₁/PFV/IPFV₂ ‘to kneel₁ (down₂)’.

In the class of inceptively static lexemes (Breu 2021), there are imperfective verbs, expressing a total event by means of the interaction with the totalizing function of the perfect, i.e. in the domain of the morphosyntactic aspect category only. Here language contact is involved. For example, the verb *jimat* ‘to have’ gets the meaning ‘to receive’ in the perfect *je jima* IPFV.PRF, in the same way as in Italian the perfect *ha avuto* ‘s/he has received’ of the verb *avere* ‘to have’. In MSL, from this interactional meaning a suffixed habitual imperfective *jimivat* HAB ‘to receive usually’ has been formed. Other clear cases of habitual derivations by means of *-iva* are rare, e.g. *činjivat* HAB from bi-aspectual *čit* IPFV/PFV ‘to make’.

Just like in Russian and contrary to Croatian, derived imperfectives in *-iva* do not form passive past participles in MSL. That this is a property of the very suffix *-iva* is shown, for example, by the competing imperfective variants in the lexeme *kupit* / *kupivat* ~ *kupovat* PFV/IPFV~IPFV ‘to buy’. Here *kupovljen* is possible, whereas **kupivan* is excluded. This restriction for derived imperfectives, is especially far-reaching, as it excludes from the event passive, typical for other imperfectives in MSL, not only the secondary imperfectives, but also the huge class of primarily imperfectivized borrowings (Breu & Makarova 2019).

Summing up the role of *iva*-formations in MSL, we can conclude that in the traditional Slavic lexicon it is mainly found in triples, containing a secondary imperfective as a variant of the simplex, mostly without special functions, but with differences in frequency. All other usages concern “primary imperfectivization”. So, *-iva* appears in two-phase lexemes, where it can have processual function, in opposition to a static simplex. Only in special cases it may serve for iterative derivations from imperfective or bi-aspectual verbs. In loan verbs, *-iva* is highly productive in forming imperfective partners from perfective borrowings, but it also plays a role in “orphan” imperfectives.

As a basis for triangulation in Romance-Slavic contact situations, two other cases will be considered in my talk, aspect in Resian in Northern Italy (as dealt with at the workshop by M. Pila) and Slavic-Style aspect in Istro-Romanian, borrowed from Čakavian Croatian, with a clearly iterative function of its secondary imperfectives (Kovačec 1971).

References

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