

Combining aspectual *for-* and *in-*adverbials in Serbo-Croatian (and beyond)

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There is an ongoing debate on the modeling of Slavic aspectual composition (SAC). For example, some authors claim that there is no object-to-event mapping (OTM) (cf. Verkuyl 1972) in Russian (MacDonald 2008), or that prefixes – but not verb arguments – yield telicity in Slavic (e.g. Łazorczyk 2010), which sharply contrasts with aspectual composition in English (and Germanic languages more generally). Also, there is no general agreement on whether in Slavic (im)perfectivity implies (a)telicity (e.g. MacDonald 2008), or not (e.g. Borik 2006). Based on the overt joint realization of (the counterparts of) aspectual *for-* and *in-*adverbials (*for-/in-*adv) in Serbo-Croatian (S-C), as in (1–3), I argue the following. **(i)** Imperfective VPs in Slavic may denote telic predicates (with Arsenijević 2006, Borik 2006, contra MacDonald 2008), including simplex imperfectives – due to OTM (contra MacDonald 2008, Łazorczyk 2010). **(ii)** In regard of the so-called *sequence of similar events* (SSE) interpretation, which emerges in the presence of bare plurals when a predicate is telic, SAC is not radically different from that in English (contra MacDonald 2008). **(iii)** A predicate containing a prefixed verb always remains telic in Slavic, irrespective of potential homogenizing semantics contributed by higher projections, e.g. in iterative/habitual contexts (with Arsenijević 2006, 2007, contra Stanojević 2012).

(i) *For-/in-*adv combinations are possible with both simplex (SimI: (1)) and secondary imperfectives (SI: (2–3)), with *in-*adv modifying a predicate quantized at the level of VP (= telic), and *for-*adv targeting a predicate homogeneous at the level of Cinque's (1999) *Asp_{repetitive}*. The very possibility to use an *in-*adv as a modifier of a predicate containing an imperfective verb rejects the view that in Slavic imperfectivity implies atelicity, advocated by MacDonald (2008), supporting e.g. Arsenijević 2006, 2007, Borik 2006, Stanojević 2012. Moreover, the fact that even simplex imperfectives may have telic interpretations suggests that there is also OTM in Slavic, i.e. that verb arguments (and not only prefixes) contribute to aspectual composition (contra MacDonald 2008, Łazorczyk 2010).

(1) Ana je za Leninu svadbu ceo dan pravila^{SimI} torte za *manje od pola sata*.

A. Aux for Lena's wedding whole day made cakes za_{in} less than half hour
'For Lena's wedding, Ana made cakes in half an hour the whole day.'

(2) Ana je sat vremena pobeđivala^{SI} protivnike u šahu za *manje od 5 minuta*.

A. Aux one hour po-won opponents in chess za_{in} less than 5 minutes
'Ana defeated the opponents in chess in less than 5 minutes for an hour.'

(3) Pera je dva minuta ispijao^{SI} limenke piva za *10 sekundi*.

P. Aux two minutes iz-drunk cans beer za_{in} 10 seconds
'Pera drank cans of beer in 10 seconds for two minutes.'

(ii) According to MacDonald (2008), SSE, which emerges within a telic structure with bare plurals contributing an indefinite number of objects that can participate in each of the iterated subevents, is possible in English, but not in Russian. The author illustrates SSE with examples containing both *in-* and *for-*adv, as in (4):

(4) The guy drank cans of beer *in ten seconds for an hour straight*.

MacDonald (2008: 147) claims that since in Russian (the same would hold for S-C) plural objects can have a 'vague' denotation associated with the mass noun interpretation (a group interpretation in which different parts of all the objects are affected at the same time), they cannot induce the SSE interpretation. He takes this (supposed) difference between SSE in English and Russian as one of the main arguments for the claim that aspectual composition in these languages is radically different. However, the SSE interpretation is one possible (even preferred) reading of the examples (1–3), in both S-C and Russian, which implies that SAC cannot be taken to be radically different from that in English w.r.t. the (un)availability of SSE.

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(iii) Although Stanojević (2012) generally argues that imperfectivity and atelicity do not have to go hand in hand in S-C (since *in-*adv can be used with imperfectives), he states that not every iterative use of derived imperfectives yields telicity, illustrating this claim with the ungrammaticality of *in-*adv in (5a) and *for-*adv in (5b).

(5) a. Taj časopis je izlazio^{SI} dve godine / **za dve godine*.

that magazine Aux iz-came two years / *za*_{in} two years

'That magazine was published for two years (/ *in two years).'

b. Tu razdaljinu je prelazio^{SI} *za manje od dva minuta* / *manje od dva minuta.

that distance Aux pre-came *za*_{in} less than two minutes / less than two minutes

'He crossed that distance in less than two minutes (/ *for less than two minutes).'

However, these constraints come from pragmatics rather than grammar, and under appropriate contexts, both *in-* and *for-*adv can be used in both types of examples, as shown in (6a–b) with their joint overt realization, (6a) being of the same type as (1–3) and (6b) with the opposite scope, i.e. *in-*adv > *for-*adv. (The latter type will be discussed in more detail in the talk.)

(6) a. Taj časopis je dve godine izlazio^{SI} *za manje od mesec dana*.

that magazine Aux two years iz-came *za*_{in} less than month days

'That magazine was published in less than a month for two years.'

b. U snovima, Pera je tu razdaljinu satima prelazio^{SI} *za par sekundi*.

in dreams P. Aux that distance for hours pre-came *za*_{in} couple seconds

'In each dream, Pera's hours long passing that distance lasted a couple of seconds.'

According to Łazorczyk (2010), the so-called SI suffixes make a predicate atelic, and the fact that in habitual contexts like (7) such a predicate has a telic reading arises because habitual contexts neutralize the grammatical contribution (i.e. atelicity) of other markers (i.e. SI suffixes). If correct, my analysis could offer a simpler explanation: in habitual contexts, the existing telic structure can be directly targeted by the *in-*adv (cf. also Fleischhauer & Gabrovská 2019).

(7) Codziennie/Wtedy prze-pisuje^{SI} notatki godzinę / w godzinę.

every-day/then copy.pres.1Sg notes hour / in hour

'Every day/Then I copy (the) notes for an hour / in an hour.' [Łazorczyk 2010: 117]

The general conclusion from the use of *in-*adv in habitual/iterative contexts is that the telic structure, once introduced (at the level of VP), never gets overridden at higher levels, but remains accessible. This is in line with proposals that keep telicity and homogeneity apart (e.g. Arsenijević 2006).

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