

**Secondary imperfectives under contact conditions: the case of Resian in Italy**  
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Resian is a Slovene-based micro-language spoken in the Italian Val Resia (Province of Udine), bordering with Slovenia, where the ancestors of today's Resians settled around the 10<sup>th</sup> century. Resian has been in a situation of linguistic contact with Romance varieties for centuries, in particular with Friulian and, from the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century onward, with Italian. In addition, in its early history and during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Resian was influenced by South German varieties. In contrast, contact with Slovene proper and its varieties has been rather weak for centuries.

In the domain of verbal aspect till the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Resian used to express the opposition of perfectivity through a double aspect system, with both an inflectional opposition (imperfect : aorist) and the derivative opposition of perfectivity (perfective : imperfective). Nowadays, only the derivative one has remained, due to the replacement of the aorist and the transition of the imperfect from the category of aspect to that of mood. As a consequence, the perfect has absorbed all functions of the former inflectional opposition. In both cases language contact with the Romance languages has certainly played a role (see, for example Breu 2011: 175–177).

Resian has already been shown to share the same derivational mechanisms of the other Slavic languages (Benacchio 2018, Benacchio & Steenwijk 2017). Perfective verbs are derived from imperfective ones by means of a prefix (*z-/s-*, *w-*, *po-*, *za-*, *na-*, *pri-*, *par-*, *o-/ob-*, *riz-*, *vi-*, *od-*, *pro-*, *do-*) or with the help of the only perfectivizing suffix *-nu*. Imperfective verbs are derived from perfective ones by means of the suffixes *-a* (*dajat* <= *dät* 'to give', *gnüwat* <= *gnüt* 'to move', adding *-j-* and *-w-* to avoid hiatus), *-üwa-* (*skučüwat* <= *skučyt* 'to jump') and *-iwa-/iwa-* (*gnjüwat* <= *gnjyt* 'to rot', *wgriwat* <= *wgrët* 'to heat, to warm up'). The same suffixes are used for secondary imperfectivization (es. *wostajat* <= *wostät* 'to stay, to remain'; *zabjüwat* <= *zabit* 'to forget', *parguriwat* <= *pargorët* 'to burn'). Note that the specific forms go back to the Resian vowel-assimilation rules.

Only part of the previously mentioned prefixes (especially *z-/s-*, *w-*) are able to form aspectual partners for simplex verbs (*sjat* : *wsjat* 'to sow'). In this case secondary imperfectivization of the perfective verb is not necessary, but it can occur (see below). Most of the Resian prefixes create specialized perfectives, that is verbs which do not share the exact lexical meaning of the simplex and therefore usually undergo secondary imperfectivization to form an aspectual correlate (*pīsāt* 'to write' => *zapīsāt* : *zapišüwat* 'to write down, to register'). If this is the case, the newly formed imperfective verb has both habitual/iterative and processual meaning (if the verb belongs to an actional class allowing for an ongoing action).

- (1) *Ko dilaš? Zapišüwan me dulce!* (process)  
'What are you doing? **I'm writing** down my debts!'
- (2) *Avokät an zapišüwa dulce.* (habitual)  
'A lawyer **registers** debts.'
- (3) *An rüdi zapišüwa to, k' an ma dëlat!* (iterative)  
'He always **writes** down what he has to do!'

It is worth noting that contrary to the general rule, *napīsāt*, the perfective partner of *pīsāt* 'to write' allows for secondary imperfectivization. The resulting imperfective verb *napišüwat* seems to have only iterative (including habitual) meaning, whereas the simplex expresses the full range of imperfective meanings. Such examples are rare and even obsolete for some speakers.

- (4) *Wsaki din ja pišēn (~napišūwan) no letiro.*  
 ‘Every day I **write** a letter.’
- (5) *Ko dilaš? Pišēn (\*napišūwan) no letiro.*  
 ‘What are you doing? I’**m writing** a letter.’
- (6) *An jē poeta, viš? An pišē (\*napišūwa).*  
 ‘He’s a poet, do you know? He **writes**.’

Aktionsarten in Resian are not as widespread as, for example, in Russian. But like in Russian, they usually do not accept secondary imperfectivization. There are, however, some exceptions (e.g. saturatives like *pyt* ‘to drink’ => *napyt se : napiwat se* ‘to drink enough/too much’). All secondary imperfectives (as well as almost all primary imperfectives) lack the possibility of forming a passive past participle.

- (7) *Njān tve dulge so wse zapīsane (\*zapišūwane).*  
 ‘Now your debts are all **registered**.’

In the domain of borrowings telic verbs of German and Romance origin differ with respect to verbal aspect. German loan verbs usually enter the system as imperfective verbs, forming a perfective partner by means of “empty” prefixation (e.g. Ger. *färben* → Res. *barbat* ‘to paint.IPFV’ => *wbarbat* ‘to paint.PFV’). In contrast, verbs of Romance origin (generally Friulian or, in the last decades, Italian) usually enter the system as perfective verbs and form an aspectual correlate with the help of suffixation. The suffix involved in the adaptation of Romance loan verbs is generally *-(w)a-* preceded by *-a-* or *-i-*, according to the conjugation class in the donor language (e.g. *provawät* ‘to try.IPFV’ <= *provät* ‘to try.PFV’ ← It. *provare*; *moladiwat* ‘to curse.IPFV’ <= *maladyt* ‘to curse.PFV’ ← It. *maledire*). The same type of derivation can be observed for rare verbs of German origin entering Resian as perfectives and forming aspectual pairs by means of suffixation. In this case only the suffix *-üwa-* is used (Ger. *schicken* → *šinküwat* ‘to give as a present.PFV’ <= *šenkat* ‘to give as a present.PFV’).

Interestingly, Resian also has a specific (productive) suffix *-inat*, used for the integration of some Romance loan verbs, but in this case the integrated verb is biaspectual (e.g. *vinčinat* ‘to win.IPFV/PFV’ <= It. *vincere*). This suffix does not play a role in secondary suffixation.

It seems, then, that in Resian secondary imperfectivization is an aspectual mechanism affecting only verbs of Slavic origin, just like in Molise Slavic, the Slavic (Croatian-based) minority language spoken in southern Italy, which shares with Resian a centuries-old situation of linguistic contact with Romance varieties. In contrast, in both minority languages “primary imperfectivization” of perfective borrowings is very productive.

## References:

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