

Aspect in the Lithuanian imperative

a typological view

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Aspect beyond the realis

- The studies of aspect have been traditionally focused on and restricted by the contexts of the indicative/realis/assertion/declarative, and especially past tense reference.
- Most influential typological studies of aspect do not treat aspectual distinctions beyond these domains.
- This is not accidental. One of the core aspectual distinctions – *completeness vs incompleteness* of telic situations – makes full sense only if the situation has already taken place or is taking place at the moment of speech.

Aspect beyond the realis

- A typical case of interest of aspectology:

PFV: *I read a book.*

IPFV / PROG: *I was reading a book.*

PRF: *I have read a book.*

- The periphery of aspectual studies (for the European languages):

participles, converbs & the infinitive, the irrealis (conditional, subjunctive), the future tense, **the imperative**.

- Aspectual distinctions, especially of the PFV-IPFV type, seem to be weakened in these categories, at least in Europe.

Aspect beyond the realis

- A typical Standard Average European situation. Italian:

PST.PFV	<i>Ho comprato/comprai del vino</i>	'I bought some wine'
PST.IPFV	<i>Compravo il vino</i>	'I was buying wine'
IMPV	<i>Compra del vino!</i>	'Buy some wine!'
FUT	<i>Comprerò del vino</i>	'I will buy some wine'
COND	<i>Comprerei del vino</i>	'I will buy some wine'
SUBJ	<i>Non voglio che compri il vino</i>	'I don't want you/her/him to buy wine'
INF	<i>Voglio comprare del vino</i>	'I want to buy some wine'

Aspect beyond the realis

- However, even within the core SAE **there are far-reaching** grammatical aspectual distinctions in peripheral categories.
Modern Greek:

PST.PFV	<i>diavasa to vivlio</i> 'I read the book'
PST.IPFV	<i>diavaza to vivlio</i> 'I was reading the book'
SUBJ.PFV	<i>tha ithela na diavaso</i> 'I'd like to do some reading'
SUBJ.IPVF	<i>tha ithela na diavazo</i> 'I'd prefer to be reading (now)'
FUT.PFV	<i>tha to diavaso</i> 'I will read it'
FUT.IPFV	<i>tha to diavazo</i> 'I will be reading it'
IMPV.PFV	<i>diavase afto!</i> 'Read it!'
IPMV.IPFV	<i>diavaze, diavaze!</i> 'Keep reading!'

Aspect in the imperative in typology

- The functions of aspectual grams outside the realis domain are critically underresearched both typologically and language-particularly.
- Here, I only focus on the PFV vs IPFV opposition in **the imperative**.
- Two brief typological overviews: van der Auwera et al. (2009) and Aikhenvald (2010: 125-128). No worldwide sample-based large-scale typological studies.
- A relatively well-researched topic in Slavonic studies.

Aspect in the imperative in typology

“Imperatives are widely believed to be **poor in aspectual distinctions** compared to other clause types... imperatives tend to have fewer aspectual forms and distinctions than non-imperatives” (Aikhenvald 2010: 125)

“In imperative, forms, which **do not presuppose prototypical aspectual distinctions** such as ‘process VS result’ are assigned aspectual values” (Benacchio 2018: 149)

“imperatives and non-imperatives may have the same aspectual forms. However, in the context of imperatives **they are often reinterpreted in terms of other – imperative-specific – meanings**, such as politeness.” (Aikhenvald 2010: 126)

Aspect in the imperative in typology

van der Auwera, Malchukov & Schalley 2009. Four possible types of imperatives in the languages distinguishing PFV and IPFV in the past tense. All four types are attested:

- (1) complete lack of aspectual marking in the imperative: Yucatec Maya
 - (2) a full distinction between the two aspectual grams: Russian & other Slavonic
 - (3) obligatory PFV and only PFV: Misantla Totonac
 - (4) obligatory IPFV and only IPFV: Egyptian Arabic & other Semitic
- The authors make no statistical claims; a pilot study.

Aspect in the imperative in typology

van der Auwera, Malchukov & Schalley 2009. Possible explanations of the lack of PFV vs IPFV distinction in the imperative:

- Pragmatic. “the typical and most frequent imperative will involve an appeal to the hearer(s) to achieve something, to perform the action as a whole” > PFV only
- Formal. Cross-linguistically, imperatives are the simplest forms => no aspect marking.
- Time-related. PFV is associated with past, IPFV with non-past > IPFV only.

Aspect in the imperative: Slavonic & Lithuanian

- All Slavonic languages exhibit a grammatical PFV vs IPFV opposition based on stem derivation. Perfectivization through prefixation and imperfectivization through affixation.
„Slavonic-type aspect“: Georgian & Kartvelian, Ossetic, Hungarian.
- All Slavonic languages have the PFV vs IPFV opposition in the imperative.
- The Baltic languages, Lithuanian in particular, have a derivational aspect system very similar to that of Slavonic.
- Less grammaticalized in Lithuanian: many biaspectual verbs, full tense paradigms independent of aspect.

Aspect in the imperative: Slavonic & Lithuanian

- Given the structural similarity and the geographical proximity of Slavonic and Baltic, the most logical choice is to test whether the functional distinctions between the PFV and the IPFV in the imperative established for Slavonic are at play in Lithuanian as well.
- The functions of the PFV and IPFV imperative in Slavonic: first described for Russian, then extended to other language of the genus. A summary based on Padučeva (2010), Benacchio (2010, 2013, 2018), von Waldenfels (2012). The functions listed below will work as comparative concepts within Slavonic as well as between Slavonic and Lithuanian.

Aspect in the imperative: Russian & Slavonic

- The DEFAULT POSITIVE IMPERATIVE: PFV. Simple commands and requests to carry out an action. Focus on the result.

otkroj *okno!*
open.IMP.SG[PFV] window.ACC.SG
'Open the window.'

- The unmarked PROHIBITIVE: IPFV

ne *pej,* *kozlěnočkom* *staneš*
NEG drink.IMP.2SG[PFV] little_goat.INS.SG become.FUT.2SG
'don't drink, otherwise you'll become a little goat' (a folktale)

Aspect in the imperative: Russian & Slavonic

- A marked prohibitive: PFV. A WARNING against potential danger + action beyond the control of the subject:

smotri *ne* *podskol'znis'!*
look.IMP.SG[PFV] NEG slip.PFV.IMP.2SG
'Be careful, don't slip!'

- The “difficult” form: the positive imperfective imperative.
Functions can be roughly divided into
 - Aspectual and pseudo-aspectual
 - Synchronically not related to aspect

Aspect in the imperative: Russian & Slavonic. Positive IPVF.IMP

- Aspectual and pseudo-aspectual functions (telic verbs)

- HABITUAL

otkryvaj *okno* *každye* *utro!*
open.IMP.SG[IPFV]window.ACC.SG every.ACC.SG.N morning.ACC.SG
'Open the window every morning.'

- FOCUS ON THE MANNER OF AN ACTION:

otkryvajte *dver'* *medlenno!*
open.IMP.PL[IPFV] door.ACC.SG slowly
'Open the door slowly!'

Aspect in the imperative: Russian & Slavonic. Positive IPVF.IMP

- **Aspectual and pseudo-aspectual functions (telic verbs)**

➤ CONTINUATIVE:

govorite, govorite!
talk.IMP.PL[IPFV] talk.IMP.PL[IPFV]
'Keep talking!'

➤ FOCUS ON THE INITIAL PHASE, a call to start an action (“*pristup k dejstvuju*”):

govorite, ja vas slušaju.
talk.IMP.PL[IPFV] 1SG.NOM 2PL.ACC listen.PRES.1SG
'Please speak, I am listening.'

Aspect in the imperative: Russian & Slavonic. Positive IPVF.IMP

- Aspectual and pseudo-aspectual functions (telic verbs)

➤ call for an IMMEDIATE ACTION:

govorite, kto vy takoj!
tell.imp.pl[IPFV]who.NOM 2PL.NOM such.NOM.SG.M

'Tell [me] [immediately] who you are!'

Aspect in the imperative: Russian & Slavonic. Positive IPVF.IMP

- **Non-aspectual functions (telic verbs)**

➤ action conditioned by the circumstances (command expected by the addressee):

vyvernĭ *karmany!*
turn_inside_out.IMP.SG[PFV] pockets.PL.ACC

čto ja govorju? vyvoračivaj!
what 1SG.NOM say.PRES.1SG turn_inside_out.imp.sg[IPFV]

‘Turn your pockets inside out (PFV)! You hear me? Come on, do it (IPFV)!’

Aspect in the imperative: Russian & Slavonic. Positive IPVF.IMP

- **Non-aspectual functions (telic verbs)**

- the PERMISSIVE:

za-xodi

come_in.IMP.2SG[IPFV]

‘Come in [after knocking at the door]’

- POLITENESS:

NEGATIVE POLITENESS: interpersonal distance > PFV

POSITIVE POLITENESS: intimacy > IPFV

Benefits *vs* costs to the addressee

Aspect in the imperative: Russian & Slavonic. Positive IPVF.IMP

- **Non-aspectual functions (telic verbs)**

POSITIVE POLITENESS:

<i>odevajte's'</i>	<i>poteplee.</i>	
dress.IMP.PL[IPFV]	warmly.COMP	
'Dress up as warm as possible.'		POLITE

<i>dokumenty</i>	<i>pokazyvajte!</i>	
document.ACC.PL	show.IMP.PL[IPFV]	
'Show your documents!'		IMPOLITE

Differences within Slavonic

- Differences in the use of aspect in the imperative across Slavonic fit the (North-)East *vs* (South-)West aspectual split discovered by Dickey (2000).
- The imperative. Same functional dimensions are at play, minor differences in separate functions (Benacchio 2010, 2018; von Waldenfels 2012).
 - PERMISSIVE: mostly IPFV (East) *vs* mostly PFV (West)
 - POLITENESS: more positive politeness in the East than in the West.
- The Western group patterns with Modern Greek

Slavonic: Summary

IPFV:

(1) habitual action, (2) focus on the manner/process (3) focus on the initial phase, (4) continuation of an action, (5) immediate action, (6) action expected by the addressee, (7) permission, (8) positive politeness, (9) simple prohibitive.

PFV:

(1a) the default positive imperative: focus on the result, (2a) negative politeness, (3a) prohibitive: warnings / actions beyond the subject's control

Lithuanian

- DEFINITIONS. I accept a distinction between the PFV, the IPFV and biaspectual verbs in Lithuanian. I am only interested in the former two. Comparative concepts, not necessarily structural categories.

➤ PFV: verbs unable to receive a progressive interpretation in the present (and in the past):

*Aš *pa-skaitau* *straipsnį*
1SG.NOM PFX-read.PST.1PL[PFV] article.ACC.SG
Intended meaning: 'I am reading an article (right now)'
Possible reading: 'I read an article (now and then)'

=> *paskaityti*[PFV]

Lithuanian

- IPFV: Verbs whose default interpretation in the present and in the past is progressive:

Aš *skaitau* *straipsnį*
1SG.NOM read.PST.1PL[IPFV] article.ACC.SG
Intended meaning: 'I am reading an article (right now)'
=> *skaityti*[IPFV]

Lithuanian

- BIASPECTUAL: heterogenous class, neither of the two. E.g. prefixed motion verbs:

Aš už-einu

1SG pfx-walk.PRS.1SG

'I get in / I'm getting in.'

Aš už-ėjau

1SG pfx-walk.PST.1SG

'I got in / *I was getting in.'

Lithuanian

- (1a) the default positive imperative: FOCUS ON THE RESULT:

pa-rašyk *man* *kai* *atskrisi.*
PFX-write.IMP.SG[PFV] 1SG.DAT when PFX.fly.FUT.2SG
'Text me as soon as you land.' **PFV**

- (8) the SIMPLE PROHIBITIVE:

negerk *šitų* *sulčių*
neg.DRINK.IMP.SG[IPFV] this.GEN.PL juice.GEN.PL
'Don't drink this juice' **IPFV**

Lithuanian

➤ (3a) prohibitive: WARNING /actions beyond the subject's control

*neišgerk/*negerk*

NEG.PFX.drink.IMP.SG[PFV]

netyčia

by_accident

šitų

this.GEN.PL

sulčių!

juice.GEN.PL

jos

they.NOM.PL.F

sugedusios.

corrupt.NOM.PL.F

'Try not to drink this juice by accident. It has expired.'

PFV

Lithuanian

- (3) FOCUS ON THE INITIAL PHASE:

valgyk *sriubą!*
eat.IMP.SG[IPFV] soup.ACC.SG
'Eat the soup!' **IPFV**

- (4) the CONTINUATIVE:

rašyk *savo straipsnį,* *man* *dabar*
write.IMP.2SG[IPFV] RPO article.ACC.SG 1SG.DAT now
tavęs *nereikia*
2SG.GEN NEG.be_needed.PRS.3
'Continue writing your article, I don't need you now' **IPFV**

Lithuanian

➤ (5) IMMEDIATE ACTION:

Valgyk greičiau savo košę ir einam!
eat.IMP.SG[IPFV] quickly.COMP RPO porridge and go.PRS.1PL
'Finish eating your porridge and let's go' **IPFV**

➤ (6) ACTION EXPECTED BY THE ADDRESSEE / triggered by the context:

dabar skambink jai!
now call.IMP.SG[IPFV] she.DAT
'Now call her!' **IPFV**

[e.g. after the two participants have discussed what they want to tell the third person]

Lithuanian

➤ (7) PERMISSION:

– *aš* *jau* *galiu* *valgyti?*
1SG.NOM already may.PRS.1SG eat.INF

– *valgyk.*
eat.IMP.2SG[IPFV]

‘My I already start eating? – Pease eat.’ **IPFV**

Lithuanian

- (8) positive politeness. Less apparent than in Slavonic, as many politeness formulas contain biaspectual verbs:

Prašau *užeikite.*
please come_in.IMP.2PL
'Please come in.' **BIASPECTUAL**

however,

Renkitės *šilčiau*
dress.IMP.1SG[IPFV] warmly.COMP
'Dress up as warmly as possible.' **IPFV**

Summary

- Independently of the system-internal grammatical status of the PFV vs IPFV opposition in Lithuanian, when the PFV and the IPFV are defined as comparative concepts compatible with Slavonic, their functional behavior exhibits an almost complete convergence with East Slavonic in the domain of the imperative.
- This is not surprising given a long-term language contact between the Lithuanian and East (not West!) Slavonic varieties. Likely mechanism: pivot-matching. The verbal domain most convergent between Lithuanian and East Slavonic.
- Main difference: the abundance of biaspectual verbs in Lithuanian, especially in politeness formulas.

Summary

- Functions studied are functional comparative concepts designed for Slavonic-internal comparison. There may be divergent functions in Lithuanian, but I have not found any. I estimate the likelihood of finding new functions as low.
- A parallel situation: Modern Greek (Benacchio 2013), whose PFV vs IPFV opposition in the imperative may be accounted for within the same set of parameters. Greek converges with neighboring the Slavonic languages such as Macedonian.
- Not included into this study: Latvian, Estonian, Finnish. A topic for future research.