

# Aspectual Complementation in Serbo-Croatian

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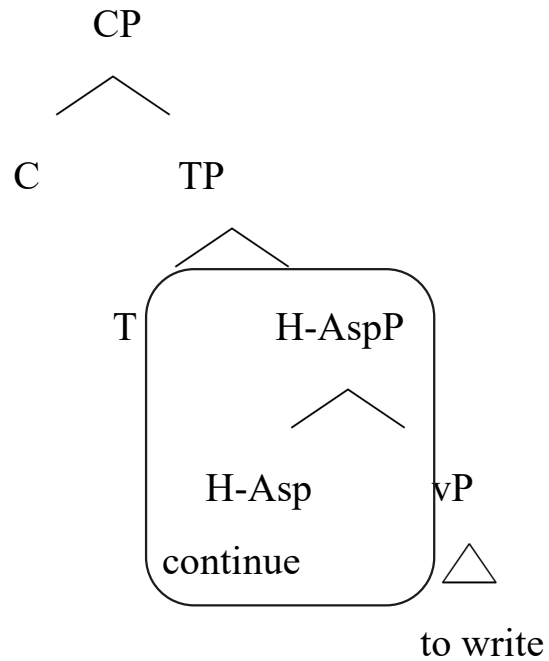
# 1. INTRODUCTION

- Developmental stages and phases of events are expressed by aspectual verbs (beginning, continuation, and completion)
- Not complete verbs, require an event complement (1), (2)
  - 1) I continued to write.
  - 2) I continued writing.

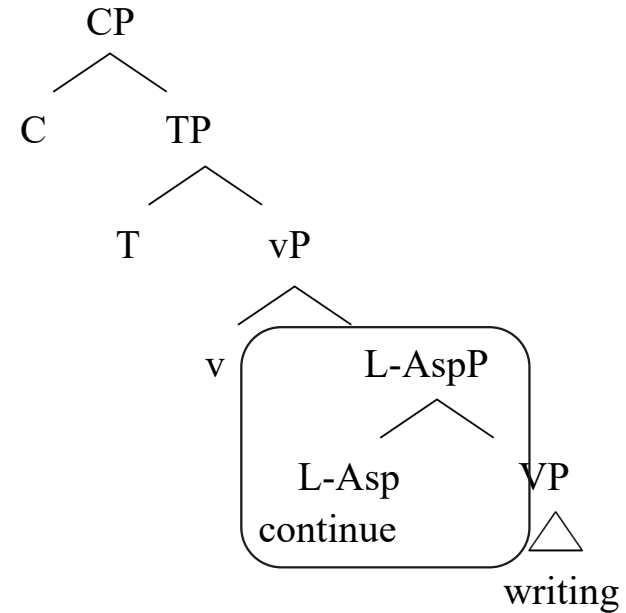
## **Fukuda's proposal for English aspectuals (2006, 2008) followed by an analysis of Greek (Lavidas and Drachman, 2012)**

- Not raising/ control verbs (heads of VPs) with different selectional characteristics
- Heads of functional category Aspect (AspP)
- Instead of lexical ambiguity, the suggested account was syntactic ambiguity (3), (4)

(3) I continued to write.



(4) I continued writing.



## 2. OBJECTIVES

### Question

- Can syntactic ambiguity with different location of aspectual functional head proposed by Fukuda account for the data in Serbo-Croatian?
- Do aspectual verbs in S-C fall into two groups and support Fukuda's proposal?
- Which complement is less limited?

## The importance of the analysis

- To present from a new angle as difference in distribution is generally taken as a stylistic matter in all standardized variants (Bosnian, Croatian, Montenegrin, and Serbian), while poorly investigated from the perspective of syntactic ambiguity (Kravar, 1953)

## Similarities

- Serbo-Croatian shows similar tendencies as English in keeping both complements, bare infinitive and gerunds
- S-C equivalences to English aspectual complements:
  - bare infinitival complements
  - *da*-complement constructions (complementizer '*da*' to followed by finite verb form), which I address in the paper as *da*-present
  - gerunds

### 3. ASPECTUAL VERBS IN S-C AND FUKUDA'S ANALYSIS

- Data presented from well known source (Ivo Andrić) and my own data from contemporary language

#### 1) Aspectual verbs allowing bare infinitive or da-present

a) *početi, stati* 'start, begin'

b) *nastaviti* 'continue, keep'

c) *prestati, prekinuti* 'stop, cease, finish'



**‘start, begin’**

(5) Stao je sedlati konja i puniti bisage.

*Start*<sub>3 M SG PST</sub> *be*<sub>3 SG PRS</sub> *saddle*<sub>INF</sub> *horse*<sub>ACC SG</sub> *and fill*<sub>INF</sub> *saddlebags*<sub>ACC PL</sub>

(*Andrić, I., Put Alije Đerzeleza 1947, Kravar 1953*)

‘He began to saddle his horse and fill his saddlebags.’

(6) Napipa vodu i stade da hladi ruke i čelo.

*Touch*<sub>3 M SG AOR</sub> *water*<sub>ACC SG</sub> *and start*<sub>3 M SG AOR</sub> *to cool*<sub>INF</sub> *hand*<sub>ACC PL</sub> *and forehead*<sub>ACC SG</sub>

(*Andrić, I., Put Alije Đerzeleza 1947, Kravar 1953*)

‘He felt water and began to cool his hands and forehead.’

(7) Stao sam da gledam. / Stao sam gledati.

*Start*<sub>1M SG PST</sub> *be*<sub>AUX</sub> *to watch*<sub>1 SG PRS</sub> / *Start*<sub>1M SG PST</sub> *be*<sub>AUX</sub> *watch*<sub>INF</sub>

‘I started watching.’ / ‘I started to watch.’<sup>1</sup>

(8) Počeli su dolaziti. / Počeli su da dolaze.

*Start*<sub>3M PL PST</sub> *be*<sub>AUX</sub> *come*<sub>INF</sub> / *Start*<sub>3M PL PST</sub> *be*<sub>AUX</sub> *to work*<sub>3 PL PST</sub>

‘They started to come.’ / ‘They started coming.’

(9) Počni da radiš. / Počni raditi.

*Start*<sub>2 SG IMP</sub> *to work*<sub>2 SG PTS</sub> / *Start*<sub>2 SG IMP</sub> *work*<sub>INF</sub>

‘Start working.’<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Not a strict translation

<sup>2</sup> The English language allows only gerunds with aspectual verbs in imperative mood

**‘continue, keep’**

(10) Nastavljam da slikam. / Nastavljam slikati.

*Continue*<sub>1 SG PRS</sub> *to paint*<sub>1 SG PRS</sub> / *Continue*<sub>1 SG PRS</sub> *paint*<sub>INF</sub>

‘I continue painting.’ / ‘I continue to paint.’

(11) Nastavljam tražiti. / Nastavljam da tražim.

*Continue/ resume/ keep*<sub>1 SG PRS</sub> *search*<sub>INF</sub> / *Continue/ resume/ keep*<sub>1 SG PRS</sub> *to search*<sub>1 SG PRS</sub>

‘I keep/resume/continue searching.’ / ‘I continue to search.’

(12) Nastojim zadržati... / Nastojim da zadržim...

*Try/ strive*<sub>1 SG PRS</sub> *keep*<sub>INF</sub> / *Try/ strive*<sub>1 SG PRS</sub> *to keep*<sub>1 SG PRS</sub>

‘I strive to keep...’ / ‘I try keeping...’

***‘stop, cease’***

(13) Prestali su graditi. / Prestali su da grade.

*Stop*<sub>3 M PL PST</sub> *be*<sub>AUX</sub> *build*<sub>INF</sub> / *Stop*<sub>3 M PL PST</sub> *be*<sub>AUX</sub> *to build*<sub>3 PL PRS</sub>

‘They stopped building.’

(14) Prestani da lažeš. / Prestani lagati.

*Stop*<sub>2 SG IMP</sub> *to lie*<sub>2 SG PRS</sub> / *Stop*<sub>2 SG IMP</sub> *lie*<sub>INF</sub>

‘Stop lying.’

(15) Ja sam prekinuo govoriti. / Ja sam prekinuo da govorim.

*I am<sub>AUX</sub> stop<sub>1 M SG PST</sub> talk<sub>INF</sub> / I am<sub>AUX</sub> stop<sub>1 M PST</sub> to talk<sub>1 SG PRS</sub>*

‘I stopped talking.’

(16) Prestajemo kontrolirati. / Prestajemo da kontrolišemo.

*Stop/ cease<sub>1 PL IMP</sub> control<sub>INF</sub> / Stop/ cease<sub>1 PL IMP</sub> to control<sub>1 PL PRS</sub>*

‘We cease to control.’ / ‘We stop controlling.’

## 2) Aspectual verbs in S-C allowing only gerunds as arguments

### *'finish'*

- Observe the arguments of the aspectual verb *završiti* 'finish' in S-C
- Such complements correspond to gerunds in English
- They are verbal or common nouns, inflected in case and number

(17) Završili smo čitanje / sa čitanjem.

*Finish*<sub>1 PL PST</sub> *be*<sub>AUX</sub> *reading*<sub>ACC SG</sub> / *with reading*<sub>INS SG</sub>

‘We finished reading.’

\*Završili smo čitati.

*Finish*<sub>1 PL PST</sub> *be*<sub>AUX</sub> *reading*<sub>INF</sub>

(Intended: We finished reading.)

\*Završili smo da čitamo.

*Finish*<sub>1 PL PST</sub> *be*<sub>AUX</sub> *to read*<sub>1 PL PST</sub>

(Intended: We finished reading.)

(18) Završili smo pripremu / sa pripremom.

*Finish*<sub>1 PL PST</sub> *be*<sub>AUX</sub> *preparation*<sub>ACC SG</sub> / *with preparation*<sub>INS SG</sub>

‘We finished preparing.’

\*Završili smo pripremati.

*Finish*<sub>1 PL PST</sub> *be*<sub>AUX</sub> *prepare*<sub>INF</sub>

(Intended: We finished preparing.)

\*Završili smo da pripravamo.

*Finish*<sub>1 PL PST</sub> *be*<sub>AUX</sub> *to prepare*<sub>1 PL PRS</sub>

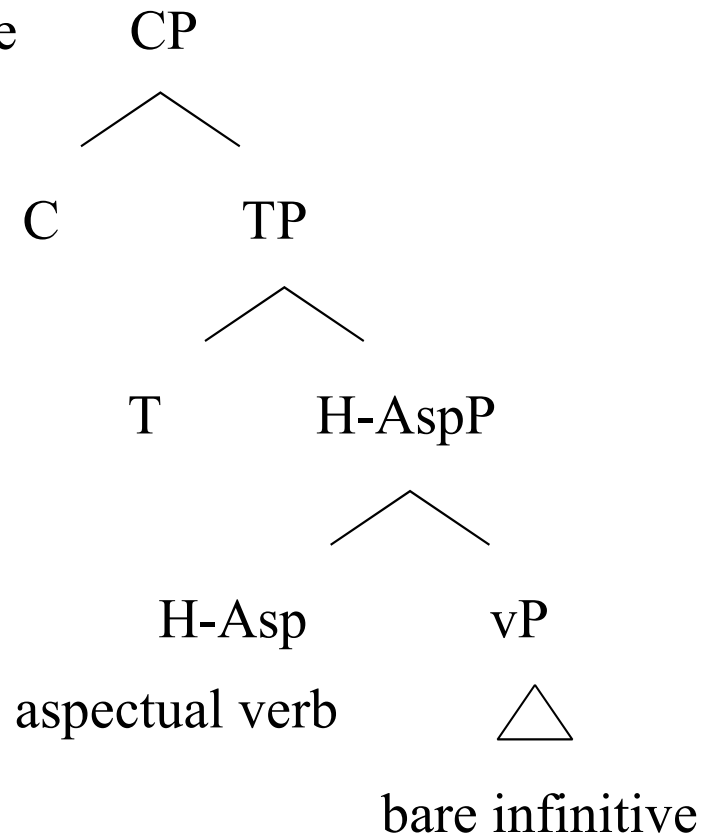
(Intended: We finished preparing.)



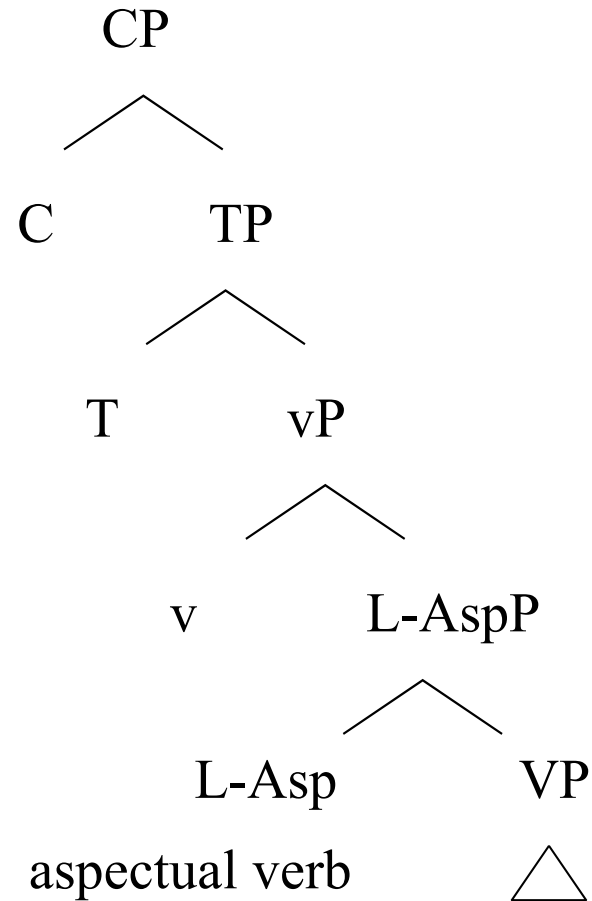
## 4. CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

- Aspectual verbs in S-C support structural ambiguity hypothesis argued for by Fukuda, therefore difference in aspectual constructions in S-C is of syntactic nature
- Distributional limitation was not observed, as they can alternate unobstructedly
- The first group selects both complements: infinitival, H-Asp (18) and da-present, L-Asp (19)

(18) Aspectual verb + bare infinitive



(19) Aspectual verb + da-present/gerund



- Infinitival choice may be preferred due to economy (not syntactic economy, to be specific - shorter constructions for pronunciation), no semantic differences observed
- The second group - noun objects selected by aspectual verbs such as *završiti* 'finish' of the second type of aspectuals, which occupy exclusively low structural position, L-Asp (19)

- The second type in S-C is less present, as observed uniquely with the aspectual verb *završiti* 'finish'
- Aspectual verbs of the first type far more dominating class

## Future research

- To build on this initial analysis, it requires Fukuda's tests on syntactic structure of complements to be done on S-C
- Analysis of infinitival/ da-present complements on other types of verbs, such as modal verbs - they show different behavior as infinitives, tend to be more limited in complementing modal verbs and imply semantic differences
- Acceptability judgment experiment with a bigger sample of speakers could provide stronger empirical evidence



Thank you!



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