Marija Brašič

University of Nova Gorica

marija.brasic@student.ung.si

Aspectual complementation in Serbo-Croatian

Abstract

Aspectual verbs in Serbo-Croatian allow both infinitival and *da*-present complements in compositional construction, and occupy both high and low positions of AspP functional category by Fukuda's proposal (2006, 2008). Lavidas and Drachman (2012) presented an analysis for Greek of Fukuda's proposal, following earlier reports in other languages. Serbo-Croatan similarities with English are reflected in the analysis I provide in this report, as aspectuals of both languages are grouped in two classes: the first class presents aspectuals freely alternating between both Aspect positons, while the other class is more limited to noun objects corresponding to gerunds in English. The first class is far more dominating in SC.

1. Introduction

I was inspired by work of Lavidas and Drachman (2012), who gave an analysis of aspectual (phase) verbs complements in Greek and English, building upon Fukuma's proposal of aspectual functional category (2006,2008). Fukuda developed earlier investigations and proposed that aspectual verbs are not raising/control verbs (heads of VPs) with different selectional characteristics, but actually heads of functional category Aspect (AspP). Instead of lexical ambiguity the suggested account was syntactic ambiguity. Two possible positions for aspectual verbs depend on whether they allow *to*-infinitivals or gerunds/participles. Aspectuals with infinitivals that are positioned above vP are termed High Aspect, or H-Asp. Verbs that select for gerunds are found bellow vP and termed Low Aspect, or L-Asp. Aspectual verbs are classified into verbs alternating between both infinitive and participal complements, and those that select only participal complements.

Can syntactic ambiguity of aspectual functional head proposed in Fukuda account for the data in SC is the topic of this paper. The topic about complements to aspectual (phase) verbs in Serbo-Croatian is underdeveloped. This paper concerns two main questions:

- Do aspectual verbs in SC fall into two groups and support Fukuda's proposal?
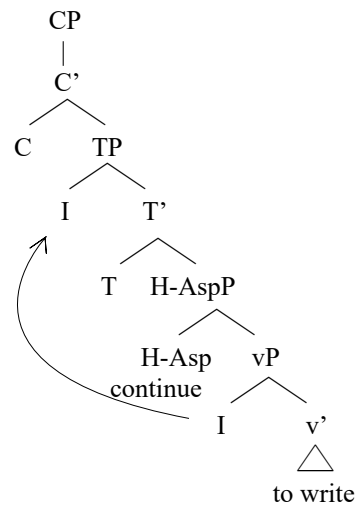- Which complement is less limited?

The difference in distribution is generally taken as a stylistic matter, while poorly investigated from perspective of syntactic ambiguity (Kravar, 1953).
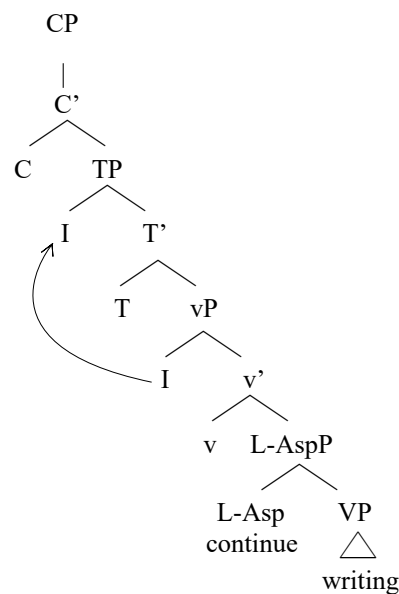
1. 1. Complements of apectual verbs

Lavidas and Drachman (2012) showed on the Greek case that infinitival complements didn't remain in aspectual constructions as an option, but were substituted throughout development of the language by gerund complements. In Japanese and English, Fukuda showed two aspectual groups: those that take both infinitives or gerundives as complements can appear as functional heads of H-Asp and L-Asp, while those that take only gerundives complements can only be in L-Asp.

In SC and other Slavic languages, aspect can be marked morphologically, expressing perfective/progressive stage. Developmental stages and phases of an action are expressed by aspectual verbs, marking beginning, continuation and completion. Aspectual (phase) verbs are not complete verbs. They require complement, bare infinitive or *da*-present (*to*-present inflected for person, gender, and number) constructions.

In an attempt to answer if aspectuals reflect syntactic ambiguity in SC, in the next section I present SC data that is in line with Fukuda's proposal. Aspectual verbs in SC optionally select between two possible complements: infinitival and *da*-present constructions. I argue that aspectual verbs in SC belong to the group that allows both infinitival and *da*-present constructions, and therefore occupy both H-Asp and L-Asp functional heads as to Fukuda's analysis. Moreover, gerunds in English are equivalent to verbal nouns in SC that complement aspectuals followed only by participals. Verbal nouns as complements to aspectuals like *završiti 'finish'* are inflected for case and number. Aspectuals of the first group are *begin, start, continue.* Aspectuals of the second group are *quit, keep, resume.* According to Fukuda's proposal, verbs of the first group are (i) H-Asp (1), or (ii) L-Asp (2). Verbs of the second group are only L-Asp (2).

1. I continued to write.

```
                    CP
                    |
                    C'
                   /  \
                  C    TP
                      /  \
                     I    T'
                         /  \
                        T    H-AspP
                            /   \
                       H-Asp     vP
                      continue   /  \
                           I    v'
                                 △
                              to write
```

2. I continued writing.

```
                    CP
                    |
                    C'
                   /  \
                  C    TP
                      /  \
                     I    T'
                         /  \
                        T    vP
                            /  \
                           I    v'
                               /  \
                              v    L-AspP
                                   /   \
                              L-Asp     VP
                             continue   △
                                      writing
```

2. Aspectual verbs in SC and Fukuda's analysis

Unlike Greek that lost the infinitive complement throughout the language development, SC shows similiar tendencies as English in keeping both complements. Equivalences to English aspectual complements in SC are bare infinitival complements and *da*-present complements. Gerunds in SC function as verbal nouns, hence Dps. In SC, aspectuals allow both complements for all phase meanings. No limitation of only one type is present in aspectual costructions of SC, however we will see how a verb *završiti 'finish'* behaves in non standard manner, selecting for nouns.

i. Aspectual verbs and bare infinitive or *da*-present

a) početi, stati '*start, begin*'

b) nastaviti '*continue, keep*'

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

'*start, begin*'

3. Stao   sam   da   gledam.   / Stao   sam   gledati.

Start$_{1p. mascul.singl.past}$be$_{1p.singl.pres}$ to   watch$_{1p.singl.pres}$/ Start$_{1p. mascul.singl.past}$ be$_{1p.singl.pres}$ watch $_{inf}$

'I started watching.'   / 'I started to watch.'

4. Počeo   sam   da   jedem.   / Počeo   sam   jesti.

Start$_{1p. masc.sg.past}$ be$_{1p.sg.pres}$to   eat$_{1p.sg.pres}$ / Start$_{1p. masc.sg.past}$be$_{1p.sg.pres}$ eat $_{inf}$

'I started eating.'   / 'I started to eat.'

5. Stao   je   sedlati   konja I   puniti bisage.

start$_{3p. masc.sg.past}$ be$_{3p.sg.present}$saddle$_{inf}$ horse$_{Acc\ sg.}$and   fill$_{inf}$ saddlebags $_{Acc\ pl.}$

                              (*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$_{3\ p.sg.aorist}$ water$_{Acc\ sg.}$ and   start$_{3p. masc.sg.aorist}$ to cool$_{inf}$ hand$_{Acc\ pl}$ and forehead$_{Acc}$

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

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

7. Počni   da   radiš.   / Počni   raditi.

start$_{2p.sg.imp}$ to   work$_{2p.singl.pres}$ / Start$_{2p.sg.imp}$ work$_{inf}$

'Start working.'

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

Start$_{3p. masc.pl.past}$ be$_{3p.pl.present}$ come$_{inf}$ / Start$_{3p. masc.pl.past}$ be$_{3p.pl.present}$to work$_{3p.pl.present}$.

They started to come.   / They started coming.

'*continue, keep*'

9. Nastavljam   da slikam.   / Nastavljam   slikati.
Continue$_{1p.sg.pres}$ to paint$_{1p.sg.pres}$ / Continue$_{1p.sg.pres}$ paint$_{inf}$
'I continue painting.'   / 'I continue to paint.'

10. Nastojim   zadržati... / Nastojim   da zadržim...
try/strive$_{1p.sg.pres}$ keep$_{inf}$ / try/strive$_{1p.sg.pres}$ to keep$_{1p.sg.pres}$
'I strive to keep...'   / 'I try keeping…'

11. Nastavljam   tražiti. / Nastavljam   da tražim.
continue/resume/keep$_{1p.sg.pres}$ search$_{inf}$/ continue/resume/keep$_{1p.sg.pres}$ to search$_{1p.sg.pres}$
'I keep/resume/continue searching.'/ 'I continue to search. '

'*stop, cease*'

12. Prestali   su   graditi. / Prestali   su   da grade.
Stop$_{3p. masc.pl.past}$ be$_{3p.pl.present}$ build$_{inf}$ / stop$_{3p. masc.pl.past}$ be$_{3p.pl.present}$ to build$_{3p.pl.present}$
'They stopped building.'

13. Prestani   da lažeš.   / Prestani   lagati.
stop$_{2p.sg.imp}$ to lie$_{2p.singl.pres}$ / stop$_{2p.sg.imp}$ lie$_{inf}$
'Stop lying.'

14. Ja   sam   prekinuo   govoriti. / Ja   sam   prekinuo   da govorim.
I   am$_{1p.sg.present}$ stop$_{1p. masc.sg.past}$ talk$_{inf}$ /   I   am$_{1p.sg.present}$ stop$_{1p. masc.sg.past}$ to talk$_{1p.sg.pres}$
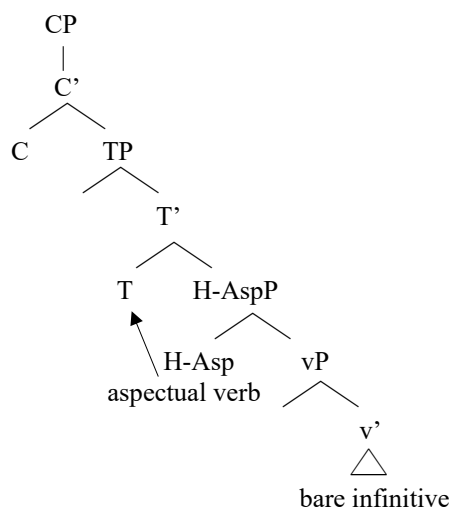'I stopped talking.'

15. Prestajemo   kontrolirati. / Prestajemo   da kontrolišemo.
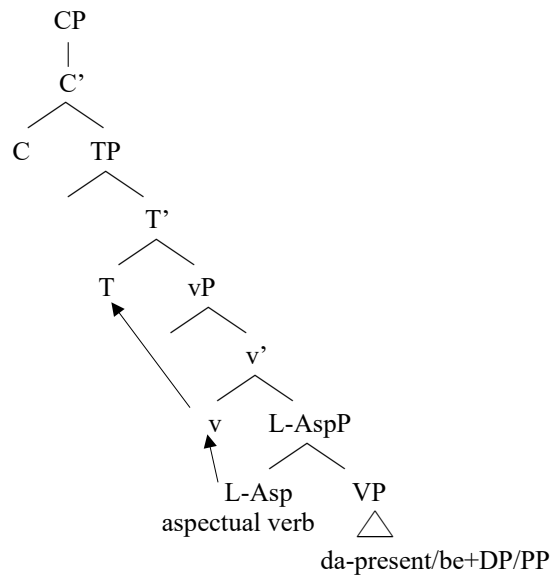stop/cease$_{1p.pl.imp}$ control$_{inf}$ /stop/cease$_{1p.pl.imp}$ to control$_{1p.pl.pres}$
'We cease to control.'   / 'We stop controlling.'

All the above presented aspectuals alternate between the types of their verbal complements. They showed to belong to the first group of aspectuals. Difference in selection follows from syntactic ambiguity and two possible positions for the head of the projection. I present bellow aspectuals that select both, bare infinitivals or da-present, and how they alternate between infinitival (16) and *da*-present (17) complements.

16. Aspectual+bare infinitive

```
                CP
                |
                C'
              /   \
             C     TP
                  /  \
                     T'
                   /    \
                  T    H-AspP
                   ↖   /    \
                 H-Asp      vP
              aspectual verb  /  \
                              v'
                              △
                          bare infinitive
```

17. aspectual+to-present/verbal noun

```
                 CP
                 |
                 C'
               /   \
              C     TP
                   /  \
                      T'
                    /    \
                   T     vP
                    ↖   /  \
                        v'
                      /    \
                     v    L-AspP
                      ↖   /    \
                   L-Asp      VP
                aspectual verb  △
                          da-present/be+DP/PP
```

6

ii. Aspectual verbs and an arument inflected in case

'*finish*'

Observe the arguments of an aspectual *završiti 'finish'* in SC. Such complements correspond to gerunds in English. They are verbal nouns, inflected in case and number. In English, the aspectual *finish* or *stop* selects only gerunds. I give some examples in both SC and English.

18. Završili   smo   sa   razgovorom/razgovor.

    finish$_{1p.pl.perf}$ be$_{1p.pl.present}$ with talk$_{Inst}$ / talk$_{Acc}$

    We finished talking.

    *Završili   smo   razgovarati.

     finish$_{1p.pl.perf}$ be$_{1p.pl.present}$ talk$_{Inf}$

    *We finished to talk.

    *Završili   smo   da   razgovaramo.

     finish$_{1p.pl.perf}$ be$_{1p.pl.present}$ to   talk$_{1p.pl.pres.}$

    *We finished to talk.

19. Završili   smo   sa   čitanjem/čitanje.

    finish$_{1p.pl.perf}$ be$_{1p.pl.present}$ with read$_{Inst}$ / read$_{Acc}$

    We finished reading.

    *Završili   smo   čitati.

     finish$_{1p.pl.perf}$ be$_{1p.pl.present}$ read$_{Inf}$

    *We finished to read.

    *Završili   smo   da   čitamo.

     finish$_{1p.pl.perf}$ be$_{1p.pl.present}$ to   read$_{1p.pl.pres.}$

     *We finished to read.

20. Završili   smo   sa   pripremom   / pripremu.

finish[1p.pl.perf]   be[1p.pl.present] with preparation[Inst] / talk[Acc]

We   finished   prepairing.

*Završili   smo   pripremati.

finish[1p.pl.perf]   be[1p.pl.present] prepare[Inf]

*We finished to prepare.

*Završili   smo   da   pripremamo.

finish[1p.pl.perf]   be[1p.pl.present] to   prepare[1p.pl.pres.]

*We finished to prepare.

The aspectual constructions of (ii) described above can occupy only low structural position, L-Asp, when selecting a noun object. The verb *završiti 'finish'* does not allow bare infinitive or *da*-present complements in aspectual constructions.

In sum, I showed that aspectual verbs in SC tend to fall into the first group that select both complements, infinitival and *da*-present. They support structural ambiguity. Inifinitive choice may be preffered due to economy, but no semantic differences is observed. Distributional limitation was not observed, as they can alternate unobstructedly. Noun objects selected by verbs such as *završiti 'finish'* represent the case of the second type of aspectuals, which occupy exclusively low structural position, L-Asp. It is important to note that the second type in SC is less present, as observed uniquely with a verb *završiti 'finish'*. Aspectuals of the first type are far more dominanting class.

3. Conclusion

I can tentatively conclude that the difference in aspectual cnstructons in SC is of syntactic nature. Further analysis of infinitival/*da*-present complements on other types of verbs, such as modal verbs, I leave for future research. They show different behavior as infinitives tend to be more limited in complementing modal verbs and imply semantic differences. Acceptability judgment experiment could provide valuable empirical evidence.

References

Brozović, D. 1953. O vrijednosti infinitiva i prezenta s veznikom *da. Jezik*, 2/1, 13–18, Zagreb,
    https://hrcak.srce.hr/51295

Bulić, H. 2019. Dopune modalnim I faznim glagolima u djelima Meše Selimovića, Skendera
    Kulenovića I Derviša Sušića. Sarajevski filološki susreti I: Zbornik radova (knj. 1).

Fukuda, S. 2006. The syntax of Japanese aspectual verbs. Paper presented at the 3rd Workshop on
    Altaic in Formal Linguistics.

Fukuda, S. 2008. Two syntactic positions for English aspectual verbs. In Charles B. Chang and
    Hannah J. Haynie (eds.), Proceedings of the 26th West Coast Conference on Formal
    Linguistics, 172-180. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project.

Fukuda, S. 2012. Aspectual verbs as functional heads: evidence from Japanese aspectual verbs.
    Springer Science+Business Media B.V. 2012. Nat Lang Linguist Theory DOI
    10.1007/s11049-012-9171-7.

Karabalić, V. 2011. Sintaksa glagola nepotpunog značenja u hrvatskom I njemačkom jeziku na
    primjeru modalnih glagola – SL 72, 171–185 (2011).

Karavdić, Z. 2010. Komparativna sintaksa bosanskog, crnogorskog, hrvatskog I srpskog jezika.
    Njegoševi dani 3– Zbornik radova –Nikšić.

Kljakić, S. 2020. Semantičko-sintaksički međuodnos faznog glagola i komplementa u
    engleskom i srpskom jeziku. Semantic and syntactic relation of phase verbs and their
    complements in English and Serbian – contrastive approach. Thesis (Ph. D.). University of
    Novi Sad, Faculty of Philosophy.

Kravar, M. 1953. O razlici između infinitiva i veze da + prezent. Jezik. Vol. 2, No. 2, 1953.

Lavidas, N. & Drachman, G. 2012. On the verbal complements of aspectual verbs. Journal of Greek
    Linguistics 12 (2012) 305-333.

Paunović, Ž. 2001. Aspectual-Temporal Relations in Serbo-Croatian Verbal Morphology. Essex
    Graduate Student Papers in Language and Linguistics 3, 171–196.

Piper, P., Antonić I., Ružić, V., Tanasić, S., Popović, Lj., & Tošović, B. 2005. Sintaksa savremenoga
    srpskog jezika. Prosta rečenica. Beograd: Institut za srpski jezik SANU / Beogradska
    knjiga / Matica srpska.

Samardžija, M. 1986. Dopune u suvremenom hrvatskom književnom jeziku. Radovi Zavoda
    za slavensku filologiju 21, 1–33.