

Control, Discourse Participants, and Tempo-Aspectual Fluctuations in Slavic Performatives

Marco Biasio (University of Padua)
marco.biasio.1@phd.unipd.it; lateralenima@gmail.com

Abstract. It is well known that in most of the contemporary Slavic languages (with the partial exception of Slovene, Upper, and Lower Sorbian) the main predicate of an explicit performative utterance is prototypically realized as a 1st p. sing. imperfective non-past form (NP^{IPF}), as the Russian [see (1)] and the Serbo-Croatian [see (2)] directive illocutionary acts reported below show:

- (1) Gospoda, *prošū*_{ASK.NPIPE.1.SG.} Vaši bilety, požalujsta.
- (2) Gospodo, *molim*_{ASK.NPIPE.1.SG.} Vas karte.
'Gentlemen, your tickets, please' (lit. 'I ask for your tickets, please')

Limiting ourselves to the indicative paradigm, a certain degree of either aspectual [cf. the shift from imperfective to perfective non-past in (3)] or tempo-aspectual variation [cf. the shift from imperfective non-past to perfective future in (4)] may occur in certain environments and with a limited number of predicates, apparently without affecting the overall semantic import of the performative utterance:

- (3) Gospoda, *poprošū*_{ask.nppf.1.sg.} Vaši bilety, požalujsta.
- (4) Gospodo, *z'amoli(t)ću*_{ask.futpf.1.sg.} Vas karte.

Although the issue has been addressed multiple times in the traditional Slavistic literature and many different proposals have been laid out, with a special focus on pragmatics and speech act theory (mostly in the spirit of SEARLE 1976), it is still not clear which parameters exactly may influence the choice between two competing (tempo-)aspectual forms in the same syntactic environment, nor how many they are, or even how many verbs can enter such an opposition. Recent corpora-driven surveys (VIMER 2014), mixed corpora-questionnaires investigations (BIASIO 2021), and psycholinguistic studies (GATTNAR, HEININGER, HÖRNIG 2018; GATTNAR, HÖRNIG 2020) have pointed out that the number and the type of possible perfective performatives in several Slavic languages might be significantly larger than previously expected.

In this talk I would like to propose a unified approach at the syntax-pragmatics interface to (tempo-)aspectual fluctuation phenomena regarding explicit performatives in Russian and Serbo-Croatian. Building on the tenets of the so-called neoperformative hypotheses (cf., a.o., SPEAS, TENNY 2003; ZU 2018), I propose that the licensing of non-prototypical tempo-aspectual forms in explicit performative utterances is triggered by the syntactic encoding of a feature in the SpeechActP shell, (cognitive) control, which can be defined as the hierarchical and contingent (i.e., not given *a priori*) relation between the Speaker and the Hearer in the speech act event. Control can be accordingly realized as an abstract variable specified at the level of the so-called Seat of Knowledge, checked against by the Speaker (which may or may not be coindexed with the syntactic subject) and spelled out lower in the structure in the AspP shell as PF (DICKEY 2000).

Selected references

- BIASIO 2021. Biasio M., "Dictum erit factum?" *Vidovremennyye svojstva performativov v sopostavitel'nom aspekte (na materiale russkogo i serbskoхorvatskogo jazykov)*, Unpublished PhD dissertation, Università degli Studi di Padova- Univerzitet u Novom Sadu.
- DICKEY 2000. Dickey S., *Parameters of Slavic Aspect: A Cognitive Approach*, Stanford, CSLI.

- GATTNAR, HEININGER, HÖRNIG 2018. Gattnar A., Heininger J., Hörnig R., *The Russian Perfective Present in Performative Utterance*, in Lenertová D., Meyer R., Šimik R., Szucsich L., *Advances in Slavic Formal Linguistics* 2016, Berlin, Language Science Press, pp. 127–146.
- GATTNAR, HÖRNIG 2020. Gattnar A., Hörnig R., *Aspect and Processing of Utterances with Perfective Performatives*, in Golovko E. V., Gorbova E. V., Kočarov P. A., Xrakovskij V. S., Čujkova O. Ju. (pod red.), *Vzaimodejstvie aspekta so smežnymi kategorijami. Materialy VII Meždunarodnoj konferencii Komissii po aspektologii Meždunarodnogo komiteta slavistov* (Sankt-Peterburg, 5–8 maja 2020 g.), Sankt-Peterburg, Izdatel'stvo RGPU im. A. I. Gercena, pp. 128–135.
- SEARLE 1976. Searle J., *A Classification of Illocutionary Acts*, in *Language in Society*, 5(1), pp. 1–23. DOI: 10.1017/S0047404500006837.
- SPEAS, TENNY 2003. Speas P., Tenny C., *Configurational Properties of Point of View Roles*, in Di Sciullo A. M. (ed.), *Asymmetry in Grammar, Vol. 1: Syntax and Semantics*, Amsterdam-New York, John Benjamins Publishing Company, pp. 315-344. DOI: 10.1075/la.57.15spe.
- VIMER 2014. Vimer (Wiemer) B., *Upotreblenie soveršennogo vida v performativnom nastojaščem*, in Kazanskij N. N. (pod red.), *Acta Linguistica Petropolitana. Trudy Instituta Lingvističeskix Issledovanij: Tipologičeskije issledovanija* (Posvjaščajetsja 80-letiju Viktora Samuiloviča Xrakovskogo), 10(3), Sankt-Peterburg, Nauka, pp. 90–113.
- ZU 2018. Zu V., *Discourse Participants and the Structural Representation of the Context*, PhD dissertation, New York University. Available at: <https://ling.auf.net/lingbuzz/003884>.