

The Use of the Imperfective Aspect in Sequences of Events

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I. The Czech Contextually-Conditioned Imperfective Past (Ivančev 1961)

- (1) Sedl^P si a psal^I.
 (2) Он сел^P и начал^P писать^I.
 (...) |—| a → (...)

“In its purest and simple form this phenomenon occurs in complex clauses, in which the predicates of individual simple clauses, joined by the conjunction *a*, are in the past tense (preterite), have one and the same subject (either singular or plural), and the first is a verb of the perfective aspect which denotes the completion of an action, whereas the one immediately following the conjunction *a* is a verb of the imperfective aspect denoting an ingressive action, the beginning of the action that is expressed by the verb.” (Ivančev 1961, 5 – translation by Dickey 2000, 204)

- contextually bound ingressive use of imperfective verbs (Ivančev)
- “the speaker actually stylizes the action in such a way that it is impossible to be conceived complexively with its beginning and end, *we are as it were in the middle of it*” (Křížková)
- “The *ipv.* verb makes the action join on immediately to the preceding one, almost without a seam (because the *ipv.* aspect establishes no succession)” (Galton)
- “contextually-conditioned imperfective past” (Dickey)

II. The Contextually-Conditioned Imperfective Past in Other Slavic Languages

- a frequent phenomenon in Czech, Slovak and Lusatian
- possible, but not so common in Polish, Serbocroat and Slovenian (?)
- impossible in Bulgarian, Macedonian and East Slavic

III. Two Types of Contextually-Conditioned Imperfective Past (Berger 2013a, 2013b)

- (3) Dubček se s ním vrátil do Prahy a četl^I pak do rádia svůj projev.
 Дубчек вернулся с ним в Прагу и зачитал^P его по радио.
 When Dubček returned with them to Prague, he gave a speech over the radio .
- (4) Přitiskl svou tvář k její a šeptal^I jí do spánku uklidňující slova.
 Он прижался лицом к ее лицу и стал^P шептать ей в сон утешные слова.
 He pressed his face to hers and whispered calming words into her sleep.
- (5) Podezřelý profesor se zatvářil^P povýšeně, pak se otočil^P a odcházel^I.
 Подозрительный профессор сделал^P надменное лицо, повернулся^P и пошел^P от Ивана прочь.
 And the suspicious professor made an arrogant face, turned, and walked away from Ivan.

- we have to distinguish between the case where an activity (or a state) follows an event and the case where an event follows an event
- in the first case the use of the imperfective aspect is quite “natural” and the Russian use of aspect is rather “strange”
- in the second case the use of the imperfective device which is marked (and typical only for Czech and Slovak, maybe also Lusatian)

IV. And what about Slovene?

- (6) Marijan je zgodaj ustal^P, poklical^P psa s seboj in šel^{VP} čez travnik.
- (7) Ko smo prišli^P do prve hiše, ki je bila krčma, nam je voščil^P srečen pot in je šel^{VP} noter.
- (8) Župan je naslonil^P plečati hrbet na klop in je gledal^I mrko.
- according to Dickey the CCIP in Slovenian “apparently occurs to a greater degree with the verb of motion *iti* ‘go’, and not as frequently with other types of verbs. A complicating factor is that Slovenian *iti* is in fact biaspectual [...]”
- (9) Naposled se je odločil^P in pisal^I: „Predragi moji! ...“ (corpus Nova Beseda)
- (10) Sédel je k mizi, vzel^P pergament in pisal^I pismo prvemu skopljencu v caričini palači.
- (11) Подозрительный профессор сделал^P надменное лицо, повернулся^P и пошел^P от Ивана прочь.
Sumljivi profesor pa je naredil^P ošaben obraz in se obrnil^P, da bi odšel^P.
- (12) „Seber svých pět švestek a marš odtud!“ zvolal^P a obracel^I se ke kořalečnici.
»Poberite svoje reči – in marš od tod!« je kriknil^P in se obrnil^P k žganjarici.
- probably the first type of the CCIP is quite common in Slovenian, the second seems not to be attested

Literature

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Corpus ParaSol

<http://parasol.unibe.ch>

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