

The Aspectual Oppositions Among the Forms of the Past Tense in Albanian Language

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Abstract

Albanian grammar authors do not share the same opinion as regards opposition Imperfect/Aoristic forms of the past tense, because often it is unified with him traverse of Slavic aspect, Imperfect aspect/Perfect aspect, putting the principle of this Traverse feature of an action in process/action completed.

Emphasizing in the opposition Imperfect/Aorist the termination and non-termination of the action as the fundamental meaning of the aspectual nature, and by using the same aspectological terminology (perfect aspect, imperfect aspect), they somehow draw a line between the content of this opposition and the content of the opposition of the perfect/imperfect aspect in Slavic languages.

In this paper we will try through a potential semantic analysis of two simple forms of the past, to bring arguments whether this opposition is the same with that of the Slavic languages in the perfect/past aspect, or not, and whether that is all inclusive or partial, how these tense forms of the past are rendered in Slavic languages where the aspect the aspect constitutes a grammatical category, especially in the Russian language, etc.

Key words: Past Simple, Present Perfect, Imperfect, Perfect, Aorist, Aspectual Opposition, Aspectual, etc.

In Albanian language more rich in grammatical forms is the past tense (Demiraj Sh., 1985), with its subdivision past simple, present perfect, past perfect and other past tenses (so called relative tenses). The three first, the so-called absolute time of the past, express pre-timing in relation to the time of speech and hence oppose each other in aspectual area (Gramatika e gjuhës shqipe 1, 2002). While the last two the so-called relative tenses of the past, that express pre-timing in relation to a particular moment of the past, do not have a clear semantic distinction between them. The semantic of the past tense is the semantic of precedence of the time of speech, which comes out in counterpoint with the present.

With aspectual meanings or connotations is generally understood the opposition perfectiv aspect/imperfektiv aspect.

In some works about the Albanian Language, regarding the opposition of present perfect / past simple Albanian linguist Sh. Demiraj distinguishes pure aspectual meaning (Demiraj, Sh., 1985). The past simple, according to the author, "aims to highlight the completion of the action at a particular moment of the past, thus it is characterized in perfektiv aspect", whereas the present perfect "presents the action in progress at a certain moment the past "(Demiraj, Sh., 1985), ie it is characterized by imperfektiv aspect". As for the counterpoint of the other past tenses the same author expresses that "it is less accessible and, therefore, more difficult to explain." Both these tenses present the action as completed before the time of speech, but if the verbal action expressed with past simple is not related to the time of speech, the action expressed by past perfect, because the consequences, does not cut ties with it. The author concludes that "past perfect is characterized by a synthesis of conduct aspect (completed action) and the imperfect aspect (the obtained state as a result of incomplete action)." At the aspect of mixed meaning, prof. Demiraj sees the difference between the past perfect and the other two forms of the past, past simple and present perfect. Even other linguists that have dealt with verbal forms of the past, such as A. Dodi, F. Agalli etc. (Dodi, A., 1968/1 & Dodi, A., 1968/2) rightly conclude that the difference between the forms of the

past time is not time, because all they show pre-timing regarding the time of speech. And according to them it is the aspectual component that enables the distinction of these forms from each other.

Putting at the core of the opposition past simple / present perfect the meaning of finished/unfinished action as aspectual basic nature of understanding, using the same aspectual terminology (perfektiv aspect, imperfektiv aspect), in a way parallels are drawn between the content of this confrontation and opposition perfektiv aspect / imperfektiv aspect as in Slavic languages (Maslov, J.S. 2004 & Bondarko, A.V. 1975 & Nils B. Thelin, 1980 & Comrie, B., 1976).

Countering the past simple / present perfect can only be justified for the feature completed action/ongoing action and only for that group of verbs that express proper action conclusion. This opposition remains partial, incomprehensive. So, this counterpoint excludes other uses such as the meaning of the repetition of the action in the past, the meaning of the ordinary action etc. Countering is isolated from cases that were discussed above, when the Albanian language past simple expresses not only unfinished action, but finished action as well (he call us every evening at home; She sent several messages a day).

From this point of view we think that for Albanian language would be more fair to be talked not about perfektiv aspect/imperfektiv aspect, but about aspectual meanings by which we understand the features of continuity, duration, intensity, completion, repetition of action, etc., that are carried out in time forms conjunction with the vocabulary and context. Implementation of the above meanings or nuances, different from categorical meaning of time, is related to semantic aspectual area, thus in the manner of the course of action in time (Bondarko A.V. 1987). Obviously, different meanings or nuances that are derived from the interaction of the grammatical form, or context of a particular lexical class should be taken into account, but that does not mean that they should affect the grammatical form. It should be better differentiated the meaning of the form itself from other meanings realized in different contexts.

Regarding the forms of the past simple, they encourage the interlocutor (the reader) to think about a situation that has happened before the time of speech. In this sense the past simple involves clear time semantics. This composed form expresses "the value" that has the past action to the present and different from the present perfect, this form represents the fact that it is imposed as a given fact without any mediation of something else, without any particular characteristic of the fact the announced. Such a distinction is confirmed by the ability these forms have to be combined with time particles. Usually past simple is used together with lexical indicators such as yesterday, last year, in 1980 etc., which express specific time of action completion. These indicators are not characteristic forms of present perfect. Present perfect usually is used with indicators such as rarely, often, several times etc.

Compared with the Russian language (Bondarko, AV, Bullanin, Ll. Ll. 1967), it can be stated that the present perfect of the Albanian language coincides with one of the uses of the past completed aspects of the Russian language, using its aoristic, but no grammatical meaning of the verb completed aspect in this language. The same can be said for the past simple, which coincides with the past forms of the imperfect aspect, when they are used in the sense of the imperfect.

Different from the contravention past simple / present perfect, the contravention completed aspect / uncompleted aspect includes verb in its entire paradigm. It is indifferent to the instant of the speech (compare, for example, continuing forms of verbs type открыть / открывать, which does not have the category of time, but belong to the completed or uncompleted aspect). Rather, the meaning of the contravention past simple / present perfect in Albanian language does not exceed this threshold; it is bordered by it and remains within the schedule of the past.

We think that regarding the Albanian language it would be more fair to talk not about perfective /imperfective aspect, rather about aspectual meanings (Bondarko AV, 1987) by which we understand the features of continuity, duration, intensity, completion, repeating the action, etc. which are realized by the temporal forms in conjunction with the vocabulary and context.

Implementation of the above meanings or nuances, different from the categorical meaning of time, is related to the aspectual semantic area, thus the manner of the course of action in time.

During the interpretation of the Albanian language past simple we forget for a moment that it is called perfect not in the time aspect (as present perfect and past perfect it is a past tense), but for its ties with the present through the consequences or outcome action. It is this feature that forms what we call perfector meaning of the past, different from the imperfector and aoristic meaning.

Even in relation to present perfect and past simple, the past simple does not form aspectual opposition. For illustration we bring a situation where we find the pre-timing used forms of the imperfect and the demonstrative manner. F.e: cameraman had filmed scenes of violence that appeared continuously before them.

In this sentence with two predicative unit it is present the opposition of past simple/present perfect (they filmed / appearing). This opposition can not be taken as aspectual opposition (perfektiv aspect / imperfektiv aspect) to the fact that the sentence functions in the context of the present morphological abstract, which entails a temporal meaning of the past simple. Verbal forms of the past simple (they filmed) realizes the meaning of perfect, while the imperfect form (appearing) shows an action with some acts (recurring), which precedes the time of speech and not connected with it. Even second predicative unit of this sentence (appearing) is characterized by aoristic meaning. Each of the scenes shown separately constitutes an act completed in the past. Both forms of the above tense realize the categorical meaning of pre-timing: forms of past simple (they filmed) realizes it in relation to the morphological context of the present abstract, while the imperfect form (appearing) - in relation to past simple.

Depending on the lexicon and grammatical features of verbs and the forms of imperfect context, the past simple, the present perfect and past perfect, besides the meaning of pre-timing in relation to the time of the speech, during their completion, have the ability to modify their meanings, and to express meanings such as: concrete action/action abstract (generalized); separate action/repeated action; completed action/action process (ongoing); Current action/noncurrent action; characterized by the extension action/its non extension etc.

All these features of verbal action in the past tense are aspectual components, which in relation to the temporal component of the past can be called secondary, irrelevant.

By perceiving the past simple, the present perfect and the past perfect as specific tenses of the past we leave out the attention the perfector meaning, aoristic or imperfector meaning and replace them with meanings of the past simple, present perfect and past perfect aspect, the aspect of mixed. To avoid this confusion of semantically different levels of language we would like to use the terms imperfector past, aoristic past, perfector past (Pinari (Kallari) A. 2014).

Citing in each subdivision the last term we note:

First, the temporal meaning of pre-timing, which is the only feature that is resistant to all three subdivisions of the past;

Second, the last term imperfector we mean a) that the instant precedes the time of speech , b) it has cut ties with the present and c) that can be localized or not in a given moment of the past; Third, the last term aoristic we consider an action a) that precedes the time of speech, b) that has cut ties with the present and c) in any event localized in a moment of the past;

Finally, the last term perfector is understood as an action a) proceeding the time of speech and b) that maintains links with the present.

It should be noted that in most cases, the realization of the many meanings of time, along with verbal forms, contextual element is used as well, and in most cases it is necessary. Therefore in the Albanian language, it would be better if we talk about the complex temporal-aspectual tools, which are linked by the function. These are the necessary elements to identify especially during

the translation in various Languages where it is noticed a broad overview of the contextual elements, especially for languages that have verbal aspect, as in the case of Slavic languages, where a verbal form also carries another meaning that deals with the time for the interior. Only in this way it will become possible the delivery of these meanings from one language to another. However this is a question as fragile as it is broad, which will continue to be the subject of numerous studies in the future as well.

Regarding the presence of several meanings, the so-called aspectual, implemented in certain contexts, we think they are not related to contravention perfective aspect / imperfective aspect. The realization of these other meanings or nuances, different from the categorical meaning of time, is related to semantic wider areas than the morphological category. Grammatical category of time for instance, is the main component for the expression of temporal semantics (Pinari (Kallari) A., 2014)., nevertheless not the only one. Other lexical means also express certain temporal relations time of this field of semantics, but in relation to morphological category, they are its peripheral elements.***

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