THE CATEGORIES OF SLAVIC VERBAL ASPECT IN ENGLISH GRAMMAR*

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1.0 The aspectual categories of *perfective* and *imperfective* have always been considered typical of Slavic languages, while their value in the grammars of other languages has been thought rather marginal. A number of authors have found that analogous categories may be used in formulating a few grammatical rules in some Germanic languages, including English, but their significance in those languages has been judged as quite minor compared to Slavic languages. This is so — these authors claim — because the difference between the two aspectual categories is morphologically marked in Slavic languages, but not, as a rule, in Germanic languages. My main point is that, in spite of the lack of overt markers (the lack is indeed not total), the perfective-imperfective dichotomy plays a very important role in English grammar: firstly, many regularities in that grammar that have up to now been completely missed can be stated by means of these two categories, and, secondly, some regularities that have previously been observed but have been rather awkwardly formulated and without sufficient generality can now be set up succintly and rigidly, in the manner of full-fledged grammatical rules.

1.1 The results of my work on verbal aspect have appeared in three publications (Ridjanović 1972, 1973, and 1976), the most comprehensive being the book *A synchronic study of verbal aspect in English and Serbo-Croatian*, which contains the material of my doctoral dissertation submitted to the Department of Linguistics of the University of Michigan in 1969. Most of what will be said here is to be found in these publications. The present paper

is a report on those results of my work that have special relevance for English grammar, supplemented with some new insights into the place and function of aspect in English and in grammar in general.

2.0 Before presenting the rules in which the two Slavic categories of verbal aspect can be used in the description of English, I would like to sketch out the main points of my reanalysis of aspect as a general grammatical category.

2.1 Of the various extant views of aspect, I have adopted as the basis for my own analysis the one proposed by Hockett in *A course in modern linguistics* in the following sentence: "Aspects have to do, not with the location of an event in time, but with its temporal distribution or contour". (Hockett 1958:237). Another possible qualification of this view of aspect would be to say that while tense accounts for the grammatical phenomena deriving from the *relative* time of the action or state expressed by a verb (that is relative to the moment of utterance or mental conception), aspect accounts for the phenomena stemming from the *absolute* time of the action or state of the verb, from its inherent temporal features that represent its "temporal contour", which does not change with a change of tense and which is present in both the finite and the non-finite manifestations of the verb, in fact most characteristically in the most neutral form, the infinitive. I would like to point out that the notion of *temporal contour* has been especially profitable in my work.

2.2 Although verbal aspect is usually attributed to verbs in isolation, especially in Slavic languages where a large majority of verbs carry built-in morphological markers of aspect, we will consider as aspectual all those grammatical phenomena that derive from the temporal contour of the *predicate phrase*. This means that although the verb generally occupies the central place in the determination of aspect due to its central position in the predicate phrase, it is also possible for adjectives and nouns to be aspectually marked in a grammatically significant way. For example, the English progressive (which, in my view, is only one manifestation of a more comprehensive aspectual category corresponding to the traditional imperfective aspect) is equally acceptable in all of the following sentences:

(1) He is joking.
(2) He is being funny.
(3) He is being a nuisance.

2.3 In order to establish relevant aspectual categories, I concentrated mostly on the syntactic constraints traceable to aspectual features of predicate phrases. Thus, I established an opposition of two aspectual categories in English corresponding to the Slavic imperfective-perfective opposition *not* by studying the meaning of isolated verbs forming such an opposition (I regard minor distinctions in the meaning of verbs, such as those introduced by prefixes in Slavic languages and particles in English, as properly belonging

to the study of the phenomena traditionally known by the German term *aktionsart*), but on the basis of the following difference in syntactic behaviour of verbs and VP's in English and Serbo-Croatian:

(4E) While he was coming here, he met a friend.	(4SC) Dok je dolazio ovamo, sreo je jednog prijatelja.
(5E) *While he came here, he met a friend.	(5SC) *Dok je došao ovamo, sreo je jednog prijatelja.

There are, in fact, a large number of syntactic contexts to which the two aspectual categories 'react' differently; the difference shows either as a difference in grammaticality (as illustrated by (4) and (5) above) or as a meaning difference, as in:

(6E) You must know her.	(6SC) Morate je poznavati.
(7E) You must meet her.	(7SC) Morate se upoznati s njom.

The main verb in (6) is imperfective and the modal meaning of the sentence (in both languages) is "logical necessity". The perfective in (7), however, rules out this meaning and assigns to the sentence the modal meaning of "obligation". Another difference between (6) and (7) is reflected in the time reference of the main verb: the imperfective verb of (6) refers to present time, the perfective of (7) to a future point of time.
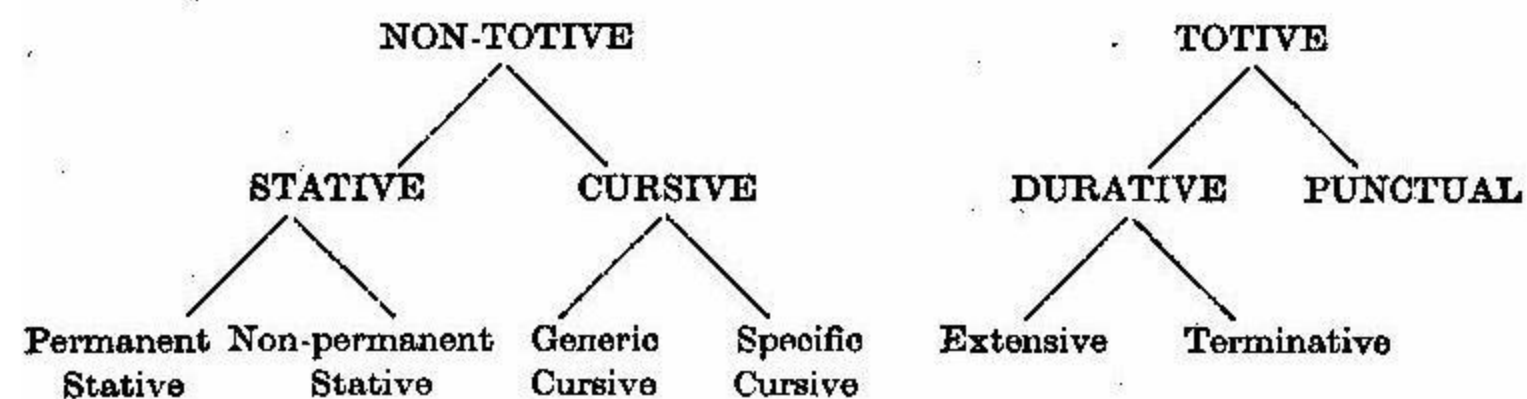
2.4 The points of the foregoing paragraph were brought up only as an illustration of how syntactic criteria can be used in setting up aspectual categories in a more rigid and, therefore, I think, more satisfactory way than can be done by studying semantic differences between individual verbs. Other grammatical rules of English making use of the 'imperfective' and 'perfective' aspects will be set out in sections 5.1.1 and those following it.

3.0 My notion of syntax, especially as regards syntactic categories which are not overtly marked, owes much to Benjamin L. Whorf and his idea of *covert* categories set out in his article "Grammatical Categories" (Whorf 1956:87–101). The central heuristic device that Whorf introduces is the device of *reactance* used to designate grammatical manifestations of covert grammatical categories. Whorf's own example is the English intransitive whose 'reactance' is the lack of the passive participle and of the passive and causative voices. Thus, Whorf's *reactance* is, in fact, the precursor of "transformational potential" used by transformationalists in the establishment of deep structure (i.e. covert) grammatical categories. I have elaborated on this device by assigning to the notion of reactance any of the following grammatical manifestations: the possibility or imposibility of fitting a category into a specified structure (which I have called *positive* and *negative reactance* respectively), and meaning differences between the categories being contrasted in specified syntactic frames (which I call *semantic differential reactance*). Thus,

I say that imperfective and perfective are categories of English grammar because they 'react' grammatically to the structures of sentences (4)/(5) and (6)/(7) in paragraph 2.3 above: imperfective shows positive reactance to the structure (4)/(5), perfective shows negative reactance to the same structure, and, together, they show semantic differential reactance to the structure of (6)/(7). This "reactance theory", in my opinion, can account for what has been hailed as a major contribution of transformational theory, leaving the asterisk * (the typographic mark of negative reactance in my terminology) as, perhaps, its most important claim to fame.

4.0 Here now is the diagram of aspectual categories and subcategories which I have found it necessary to posit in both English and Serbo-Croatian to account for the reactance of aspectual nature that I have examined:

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        NON-TOTIVE                              TOTIVE
         /      \                              /      \
   STATIVE      CURSIVE                  DURATIVE      PUNCTUAL
    /    \       /    \                   /      \
Permanent Non-permanent Generic Specific  Extensive  Terminative
Stative   Stative       Cursive Cursive
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4.1 *Non-totive* and *totive* correspond to traditional imperfective and perfective aspects respectively. The older terms were found inadequate because they imply that 'perfective' verbs designate the completion of the action expressed by the corresponding 'imperfective', which, apart from being based on an idea of aspect inconsistent with my own, is hardly true of a large number of aspectual pairs, such as *vidjeti — vidjati* ('see' — 'see occasionally'). I find that the signaling of the completion of the verbal action, in Slavic languages usually by means of a prefix, is more in the nature of an aktionsart. I have, in fact, kept the term 'perfective' for an aktionsart occurring with two sub-aspects of the totive aspect (see Ridjanović 1976: 107—111 and diagram on p. 112). The term *totive* has been adopted because it represents best what I find to be the common aspectual denominator of all traditional 'imperfective' verbs: the indivisibility or totality of the temporal dimension or contour associated with them, even if the verb implies duration of some time, as with totive duratives (see section 4.5). The applicability of the two major aspectual categories in English grammar, illustrated in section 2.4, will be presented more fully in sections below, after a brief account of the other categories figuring in the above scheme.

4.2 The aspectual difference between the two subdivisions of non-totive aspect, the ones I have called *stative* and *cursive*, is reflected in the following examples:

Stative	Cursive
(8E) *While the room measured 3 by 4 metres, the picture fell from the wall.	(9E) While we were measuring the room, the picture fell from the wall.
(8SC) *Dok je soba mjerila 3×4 metra, slika je pala sa zida.	(9SC) Dok smo mjerili sobu, slika je pala sa zida.
(10E) — What are you doing? — *I know English.	(11E) — What are you doing? — I am learning English.
(10SC) — Šta radiš? — *Znam engleski.	(11SC) — Šta radiš? — Učim engleski.

These examples show that the temporal contour of statives is totally devoid of any progression or development of either the state denoted by the verb or the time occupied by it — hence we cannot use any segment of it for a temporal reference of any kind (since, in fact, there *are* no segments), as illustrated by (8), nor can a stative co-occur with a grammatical category showing progression in time of whatever is expressed by the verb, such as the English progressive and the Serbo-Croatian *pravi prezent* ('real present tense'), as shown by the examples of (10). None of these restrictions apply to cursive verbs, as evidenced by the corresponding sentences in the right-hand column.

4.3 While the two sub-categories of stative aspect share the syntactic reactance set out in the foregoing paragraph, they have differences of their own based on the following reactances:

Permanent Stative	Non-Permanent Stative
(12E) *The following day the highway began to join Belgrade and Niš.	(13E) The following day he began to hate her.
(12SC) *Sutradan je autoput počeo da spaja Beograd i Niš.	(13SC) Sutradan ju je počeo mrziti (or: zamrzio ju je).
(14E) *He stood up and resembled his father.	(15E) He stood up and felt emberrassed.
(14SC) *Ustao je i sličio na svog oca.	(15SC) Ustao je i osjećao se zbunjeno.

I have given here only two reactances: one, illustrated by the examples of (12) and (13), showing that a permanent stative cannot, and non-permanent stative can , be used in structures designated to convey the idea of a momentary inception of state [1], the other, illustrated by (14) and (15), showing that a permanent stative cannot, and a non-permanent stative can, be conjoined to a preceding totive VP, if the tenses of the conjoined verbs are the same.

4.4 The cursive verbs and/or verb phrases can be subdivided into generic and specific cursives on the basis of the following reactance:

(16E) While they travelled, she
thought he was ideal for her.

(17E) *While they were travelling to
Turkey, she thought he was
ideal for her.

(16SC) Dok su putovali, mislila je da
je on idealan za nju.

(17SC) *Dok su putovali u Tursku,
mislila je da je on idealan
za nju.

Thus, generic cursives — typically verbs and VP's denoting habitual actions — can be used in an adverbial time clause setting the temporal frame for a co-extensive non-permanent stative, while specific cursives — verbs and VP's indicating single events of some duration — cannot be so used.

4.5 The totive aspectual category can be divided into two major subcategories, one consisting of totives which not only can, but must involve duration of some time, i.e. duration longer than a point of time, the other subcategory being the punctual aspect of verbs whose actions are conceived of as taking place at a (mathematical) point of time. Thus, durative totives can be modified by time adverbials denoting *periods* of time, while punctual totives cannot be so modified:

Durative Totive

(18E) He sat (for) about
ten minutes.

(18SC) Posjeo je desetak
minuta.

Punctual Totive

(19E) *He fell down (for)
about ten minutes.

(19SC) *Pao je desetak minuta.

(20E) She ate it all up in
ten minutes.

(20SC) Pojela je sve za deset
minuta.

(21E) *She coughed in ten
ten minutes.

(21SC) *Nakašljala se za deset
minuta.

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[1] This is also manifested in the incapacity of Serbo-Croatian permanent statives, as contrasted with the capacity of Serbo-Croatian non-permanent statives, to form what I have called the *inceptive* aktionsart indicating the beginning of a state or action, frequently formed with the prefix *za-*, e.g. *mrziti — zamrziti*, but *stajati* ('to cost') — **zastajati, mirisati — zamirisati*, but *sličiti — *zasličiti*.

4.6 It is also possible to subdivide the durative totive category into two subcategories on the basis of the fact that we cannot reverse the adverbials of (18) and (20) and still have grammatical sentences. This is because the temporal contour of verbs like *eat up* and *pojesti* implies, in addition to duration, a terminating point, absent in verbs like *sit for some time* and *posjesti*. I have called the subaspect of the former group of verbs *terminative*, that of the latter group *extensive*.

5.0 Having thus outlined the scheme of aspectual categories that I find need to be posited in English grammar as a result of contrastive investigation in relation to Serbo-Croatian, I will now take up each category, or rather each pair of binary categories, to show how they can be used in formulating simpler and more general rules relating to some sections of English grammar, than has so far been possible.

5.1.0. First, let us see what use we can make of the most general aspectual dichotomy of non-totive versus totive in the interpretation of the meaning of English sentences with modal verbs. Before discussing the details of the co-occurrence of these aspectual categories with individual modal verbs, I should point out that the non-totive aspect in English is a more comprehensive category, which can be manifested by the component of durativeness contained in the meaning of the verb itself (as in *know*), by the progressive and the perfect occurring with any verb, and by a feature which I have marked (+ repetitive) and which can be signaled either by a frequency adverbial in the same sentence or by general context. In connection with the last feature, I should point out that I have not been able to establish 'iterative' as an independent aspectual category, but only as an aktionsart of cursive subaspect of non-totive.

5.1.1 A general effect of totive aspect co-occurring with verbs preceded by modal auxiliaries is to decrease the number of possible interpretations of the modal. This is partly due to the fact that totive verbs co-occurring with modals tend to have only future time reference, which automatically rules out some possible interpretations of individual modal verbs.

5.1.2 This effect is seen at work in the first modal that we shall look at, the modal *must*:

(22) He must drink.
(23) He must drink a glass of milk.

The aspect of the main verb in (22) is non-totive, in (23) it is totive. As a result of the aspectual difference, the modal in (22) may mean either 'obligation' or 'logical necessity', while the same modal in (23) can only mean 'obligation'.

5.1.3 Somewhat similar reactance to the two major aspects is found in the VP's combined with the negative form of *can*:

(24) She can't read Chinese writing.
(25) She can't read the whole book.

In addition to the meaning of 'ability' or 'permission' (which are more pre-cisely called in the negative 'lack of ability or permission') shared by both sentences, sentence (24) with non-totive aspect may also have the meaning of 'logical necessity', which, when *can* is negated, is also labeled 'inadmissibility of supposition'. This last meaning is rendered in Serbo-Croatian as *NP mora da ne.* . and is easier to grasp if we expand (24) with something like "...or else she would have helped me read my Chinese letter".

5.1.4 We will now use *could* in a pair of sentences different with regard to the non-totive : : totive opposition in the VP:

(26) They could save 1,000 dinars a month.
(27) They could save her from bankrupcy.

While the conditional meaning of *could*, paraphrasable as *would be able to* and usable both as a 'pure' conditional and as the 'soft' version of *can*, is present in both (26) and (27), *could* in (26) can also be interpreted as the simple past tense of *can*, i.e. it can mean *were able to*, which the *could* of (27) cannot. If we want to put (27) in the past, we can make it only into contrary-to-fact past, formed by means of the structure *could + perfect infinitive*. This usually creates learning problems for Serbo-Croatian speaking, and pre-sumably also Polish speaking, learners of English, because Serbo-Croatian and Polish lack correspondents of the English perfect infinitive, though the totive verb associated with *moći* and *moc* (can) also denotes only contrary-to-fact past. The simple pedagogical rule would now be:

To translate the past tense of Serbo-Croatian *moći* and Polish *moc*, use *could + per-fect infinitive* if the main verb is totive ,otherwise use present infinitive after *could* for factual past and perfect infinitive for contrary-to-fact past.

5.1.5 The only difference which the totiveness feature brings to VP's used with *may* and *might* is to limit the time reference of the 'probability' meaning of these modals to future time; compare the following sentences:

(28) He may know that.
(29) He may find out about that.

The same is true of *can* and *could* used with the meaning of 'probability'.

5.1.6 *Will* expressing the speaker's supposition about a present state of affairs is compatible only with non-totive verbs, as shown by the difference between the following two sentences:

(30) You will know my brother.
(31) You will meet my brother.

5.1.7 I will now present in tabular form those characteristics of English modals which are conditioned by the aspect — totive or non-totive — of the verb or verb phrase with which they associate.

Modal Auxiliary	Features of meaning of the associated VP	
	— shared by totive and non-totive VP's	— specific to non-totive
MUST	obligation	logical necessity
CAN'T	lack of ability or permission	inadmissibility of supposition
COULD	'would be able to'	'was/were able to'
WILL	futurity, volition, determina-tion, etc.	supposition about a present situation
MAY-MIGHT CAN-COULD	permission and future possibility	present possibility

(Note: Only the shared meanings of *may-might* and *can-could* are considered. The 'ability' meaning of *can-could* is not sensitive to change of aspect.)

5.1.8 The pedagogical implications of the foregoing considerations about the meaning of English modal verbs in relation to the two basic aspects found in Slavic languages as (generally) morphologically distinct pairs should now be easily seen: Slavic learners of English can use a readily recognizable grammatical distinction in their native language for easier mastery of some fairly complex grammatical phenomena in the English language. Naturally, the pedagogues still need to work out the details of the methodological plan for mastering these phenomena.

6.0 Another area of English grammar which can be significantly improved upon and simplified by means of my scheme of aspectual categories is the use of tenses in English. These would include the *be + -ing* forms, which I treat as one possible overt manifestation of the more fundamental category of non-totive aspect. The same applies to perfect tenses. In fact, since the English progressive *I am writing it* means 'I am engaged in the process of writing it' and the perfect *I have written it* means 'It have the property of having written it', they are both so obviously non-totive that there is no need to argue this point.

6.1 Before discussing the details of a new approach to the use of tenses in English, I need to ask you to take another look at my aspect-based classific-ation of English verbs in section 4.0 (which, incidentally, I believe to be valid in a great number of languages) to observe that it quite clearly embodies something in the nature of a *cline* (in Halliday's or the systemic sense of the term): the left-most category of permanent statives is made up of verbs such as *pertain, consist, belong*, which, regardless of grammatical context in which

they are used, imply considerable duration of what they stand for. In fact, their duration is unlimited in the sense that it is often co-extensive with the very existence of the subject of which they predicate something. As we go from one category to the next from left to right in the diagram on page 86, the intrinsic duration of whatever the verbs signify becomes more and more limited until we come to the rightmost category of punctual verbs, which are conceived of as taking place at a point of time, i.e. whose duration, psychologically speaking, is zero.

6.2 Let us first look at the be + -ing forms. Since the primary semantic function of the progressive is to denote relative duration of what is meant by the verb, there is an interesting relationship between the aspects and sub-aspects as I have posited them and the use of the English progressive: the more limited the intrinsic (or 'lexical') duration of a verb becomes — as happens when we move from left to right in our diagram — the more likely it becomes that the verb will combine with the progressive form for expression of relative duration. Only totive durative forms, being durative intrinsically, do not share this tendency. I will take up individual aspectual categories to examine implication of this general relationship for the use of the progressive with each time.

6.3 Permanent statives denote, as their name suggests, permanent states of limited duration and therefore never combine with the progressive[2]. The establishment of this aspectual category helps us make more precise the well--known but usually rather loosely formulated rule that 'certain' verbs, which denote various states, are not used with the progressive. We can say that of the two categories of statives, permanent statives are never used with the progressive, while non-permanent statives may be so used. Verbs which belong in the permanent stative category denote a *property* of the subject or its *relation* to another entity, e.g. *pertain, contain, belong, deserve, strike someone as, relate, surround* (the last two only with inanimate subjects). Predicates of permanent stative aspect also include most surface structure adjectives, such as *tall, deep, expensive, fat*[3], and the overwhelming majority of surface structure nouns. As to the use of the progressive form, the simple

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[2] In this sentence 'never' means 'never except in really outlandish styles of fantasy-writing or ultra-modern poetry'. In such styles almost anything goes, and the study of such writings should be undertaken, in my opinion, only after the grammar of more down-to-earth styles is fully understood. In any case, a contrastively based study is hardly a place to discuss points of 'outlandish' grammar.

[3] The permanent state label should not be taken literally. As most other grammatical labels, this one also fits only the 'typical' members of the category, its so-called 'prime analogues'. Thus *fat*, although not a 'permanent' state of individual living beings, is aspectually a permanent stative because, among other things, it cannot co-occur with the progressive form, as *funny* can, for example.

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new rule would be:

Never use a progressive form with a permanent stative.

6.4 Non-permanent statives are typically made up of verbs indicating (1) a *mental state: know, understand, believe, remember, realize, suppose*; (2) an *emotional state: like, love, admire, care, appreciate*; (3) *passive perception: smell, taste, feel*. Non-permanent statives, normally used, do not combine with the progressive. However, they are different from the permanent statives in that it is not impossible for them to co-occur with the progressive. This may happen if the speaker wants to suggest that the state or condition indicated by a verb is not completely static, that some development of the state or condition is implied. Usually, it is the *intensity* of the (emotional or mental) state that is considered. Someone who did not like England at first but began to like it later might, at one point of her or his stay there, say: *I am liking England more and more*. This seems to be more likely to happen with verbs indicating emotional states than with the other two subgroups of non-permanent statives. But generally speaking, it is possible to use a non-permanent stative in the progressive form whenever the idea of development is compatible with the meaning of the verb.

6.5 Generic cursive predicates typically denote habitual actions and their verbs are therefore most fittingly used with *simple* tenses. However, contrary to rules usually found in school grammars, these verbs can be, and indeed quite often are, used with the progressive. This happens especially when the verb is modified by a limiting time adverbial such as *at/during that time*, *these/those days*, etc., or if it serves as a time frame for a punctual verb:

(33) Those days she was watching TV every night.
(34) He was working in a motor factory at that time.
(35) Tom was playing in a jazz-band when he bought that trumpet.

Often, a generic cursive is used with the progressive without a limiting time adverbial in the same sentence. Then it serves to emphasize progression of the (habitual) action rather than to state the mere fact of its having taken place. The progressive is also used for stylistic reasons, mostly for vividness of presentation. However, since Slavic languages require the use of 'imperfective' verbs with habitual actions, learners with a Slavic language background who wrongly identify their imperfective aspect with the English progressive tend to overuse the progressive, extending it to almost all cases of habitual actions. They should be warned that, although it is sometimes possible to use the progressive in such cases, it is definitely not the usual form to be used with a majority of habitual action verbs.

6.6 As specific cursive is the aspect of a predicate phrase indicating longer--than-a-point single event, the progressive is the usual form with which this

aspect is realized:

(36) He was working in his garage that day.

(37) She was sewing all day yesterday.

(38) He was playing the trumpet when I came in.

However, the progressive is not the obligatory marker of each occurrence of specific cursive aspect. In sentences like (36) and (37) the simple tense would be just as acceptable; indeed the use of the progressive in such sentences may add an emotional note, such as irritation of the speaker at what is being said. This is another fact that is often misrepresented in school grammars, which usually make it appear as though the progressive is obligatory with verbs modified by an adverbial specifying that an entire period of time was occupied by the action of the verb. In fact, the use of such adverbials makes the progressive, as an extra signal of duration, somewhat redundant. The case of (38), however, is different: here the progressive is obligatory. This happens every time a single event serves as the time-frame for another point-like event, or, more generally, whenever one of the time points filled by a single event of some duration coincides with another point specified somehow in the sentence, the immediate discourse, or the general context. This provides us also with a very useful obligatory rule for the use of the *present* progressive: this form must be used for single events going on at the moment of utterance, since one of the time points occupied by the event must coincide with the moment of utterance.

6.7 The subdivision of totive aspect into durative and punctual has important consequences for the use of the English progressive. The durative subaspect may not be used with the progressive to denote an on-going action, whether past or present, whereas the punctual is frequently used with that function. In fact, only those totive durative VP's which I have called extensive (see section 4.6) can at all be used with the progressive; the meaning is, then, that of 'immediate future':

(39) She is stainyg here for two days.

That terminative verbs cannot be used with the progressive is shown by:

(40) *He is building his house in two weeks.

Punctual verbs, however, are freely and frequently used with the progressive:

(41) He is reaching the top.

(42) I am beginning to learn English.

(43) A rock is falling down.

(44) We are leaving tomorrow.

(45) He is knocking on the door.

These examples show that a variety of meanings can be conveyed by different punctual verbs used with the progressive. Since a punctual verb indicates an event conceived of as taking place at a point of time and since a point cannot 'last', the progressive form used with a punctual verb never really means duration of the event itself. Rather, it refers to one of the following:

1. Attendant circumstances prior to, and/or after, the point-event, including the event itself, as in (41) and (42).

2. The temporary event which leads to the point event indicated by the punctual verb, with both events being of the same basic nature (*to be falling down* and *to fall down* are of the same nature, but *to be reaching* the top could mean merely climbing towards) it as in (43),

3. A series of point-events in close temporal proximity, as in (45).

4. A future event. (This meaning is not restricted to punctuals).

Which meaning will be conveyed depends on: (a) the lexical meaning of the verb, and (b) the other elements in the VP and sometimes in the sentence or even a broader context. An isolated sentence may be ambiguous as to two or more of these meanings. Thus, for example:

(46) He is breaking the box now

is ambiguous as to meanings (1), (2), and possibly (3);

(47) She is hitting him

is ambiguous as to meanings (2) and (3), and every punctual verb with an element of voluntary action in it may, in the progressive form, also have blended in it the meaning of a 'planned future event', unless it is deliberately excluded by context.

7.0 A number of important points in the use of the English perfect tenses can be clarified and made more specific by means of the new system of aspectual categories proposed here, as I will try to show now.

7.1.0 Starting again from the left-most category of permanent statives, we discover that the perfect very rarely co-occurs with this category. The reason is not difficult to find: the perfect inevitably limits the time reference, in one way or another, of the verb with which it is used: since permanent statives typically denote *permanent* states, it is to be expected that they will be 'resistent' to a form whose basic function clashes with the notion of permanence. Thus, the sentence:

(48) This rock has weighed a hundred pounds

strikes us as illogical and for that reason also perhaps ungrammatical.

7.1.1 It seems that there are only two ways in which permanent statives can be used with the perfect. One is in a sentence with the illocutionary force

of *indirect statement*[4] such as:

    (49) Until now this problem has pertained to grammar

taken as an abridgement to something like "You have been saying that this problem pertains to grammar" with the understatement "... and you will probably, as usual, change your mind now". The other possible use of permanent statives with the perfect is in combination with the past tense resulting from a past simple such as the following:

    (50) The house measured 100 by 75 feet.

The understanding is that the house no longer exists, i.e. that the permanent stative *measure* is coextensive with the time of the existence of the subject to which it serves as predicate. In indirect speech (50) becomes:

    (51) She said that the house *had measured* 100 by 75 feet.

Another use of perfect with this aspect is found in combination with the word *always*:

    (52) He has always resembled his father,

especially if this is said in response to a claim like "He now seems to resemble his father more than his mother."

    8.0 In addition to the foregoing reactances which permeate whole sections of English grammar, the new aspectual categories are manifested in a host of other individual reactances or selectional constraints which, though individual, are not less significant from the point of view of English grammar taken as a whole. It is to some of these individual reactances that I will now turn.

    8.1. I will first demonstrate a rule of great pedagogical value which I find to be a very convincing example of the indispensability of setting up in English grammar the two aspects corresponding to the Slavic 'imperfective' and 'perfective'. Namely, no grammar of English has yet been able to account systematically for the fact that we can say:

    (53) I wish you knew my brother

but not

    (54) *I wish you met my brother,

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[4] This is one of the illocutionary acts that I have added to Austin's list on page 98 of his book cited in the bibliography. The illocutionary force of "indirect statement" would attach to every sentence whose contents are claimed to be true by a person other than the speaker himself, but without explicit information about the claim (which is therefore different from closer-to-surface phenomena of the traditional distinction between direct and indirect speech).

which idea must be expressed by:

    (5) I wish you would meet my brother.[5]

Now, the simple rule is:

    After *wish* expressing present desire use past tense of the verb in the complement clause if the verb is non-totive and *would + verb stem* if it is totive.

    8.2.0 A set of reactances of the non-totive/totive dichotomy is related to what structuralists called *concatinative* verbs, i.e. verbs which, though not modal, are followed by the infinitive (with or without *to*) of another verb which completes their meaning. They have traditionally been included in the class of verbs of 'incomplete predication'.

    8.2.1 First, let us look at the verbs *begin* and *stop* (the latter in the sense of *cease*). It is a long established fact of Slavic grammar that Slavic verbs corresponding to these two verbs cannot be concatinated with 'perfective' verbs. This is true of English too, as can be seen from the following positive/ /negative reacatnce:

    (56) He began to live/stopped living in China.

    (57) *He began to stay/stopped staying in China for 3 weeks.

In the latter example I have deliberately chosen what I have called a totive durative verb phrase (cf. 4.5) which, unlike a totive punctual, obligatorily involves duration of a period of time that we might logically suppose to have a beginning and an end. However, here, as in so many other cases, logic and grammar do not go hand in hand: the temporal contour to totives is perfectly 'solid' so that no section of it — including its initial and final points — can be used for any grammatical reference.

    8.2.2 The following three reactances with concatinatives involve expressions frequently used in spoken English; the ensuing rules are therefore important even on a fairly elementary level of English grammar.

    (58) He seems to know the answer.
    (59) *He seems to learn the answer.
    (60) He has yet to learn the answer.
    (61) *He has yet to know the answer.

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[5] It is a curious fact that, although many grammarians have established aspectual categories corresponding to totive and non-totive, they have not shown what part these categories play in the structure of English sentences. Curme, for instance, divides English verbs on the basis of aspect into four categories (Curme 1931:373), two of which correspond to the traditional aspectual dichotomy between imperfective and perfective. In another section of his *Syntax* (1931:402—3) he talks about the subjunctive used after *wish*, but does not relate it to his aspects. With him, as with most other scholarly traditionalists, aspects seem to be purely logical categories with little direct relevance to syntactic well-formedness.

(62) She would/might like to see the old church.
(63) *She likes to see the old church.

These examples show that *seem* will be linked only to a verb of non-totive aspect and *have yet to* to one of totive aspect, while *like* will take a totive verb as its complement only if preceded by a modal.

9.0 What are the deeper grammatical roots of these and similar constraints is not quite clear to me at this moment. Certain constraints of an aspectual nature on verb phrase conjoining (cf. Ridjanović 1976: 60—62) seem to be related to the constraints involving concatinatives, although I have not been able to set up a more general rule that would unite the two types of constraints. These matters need to be clarified by further research. Besides, the aspectual categories that I have posited are relatable also to the category of transitivity in verbs, the number and the mass/count dichotomies in nouns, and to some other grammatical phenomena that, at first blush, seem quite unlikely to have anything to do with aspect. They open up new areas of research, which, if undertaken on an abmitious scale, would, in may opinion, bring about major advances in the description of English.

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