

The role of prefixes in the formation of aspect and related categories.  
Problems of grammaticalization  
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# **Borrowed preverbs and the limits of contact-induced change in aspectual systems**

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# Outline

- “Slavic-style” aspect
- Contact-induced grammatical change
- MAT-borrowing of prefixes
- PAT-borrowing of prefixes
- Other borrowing phenomena
- Conclusions

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# “Slavic-style” aspect

Term coined by Dahl (1985: 84-89) to cover the aspectual systems of languages sharing the following characteristics:

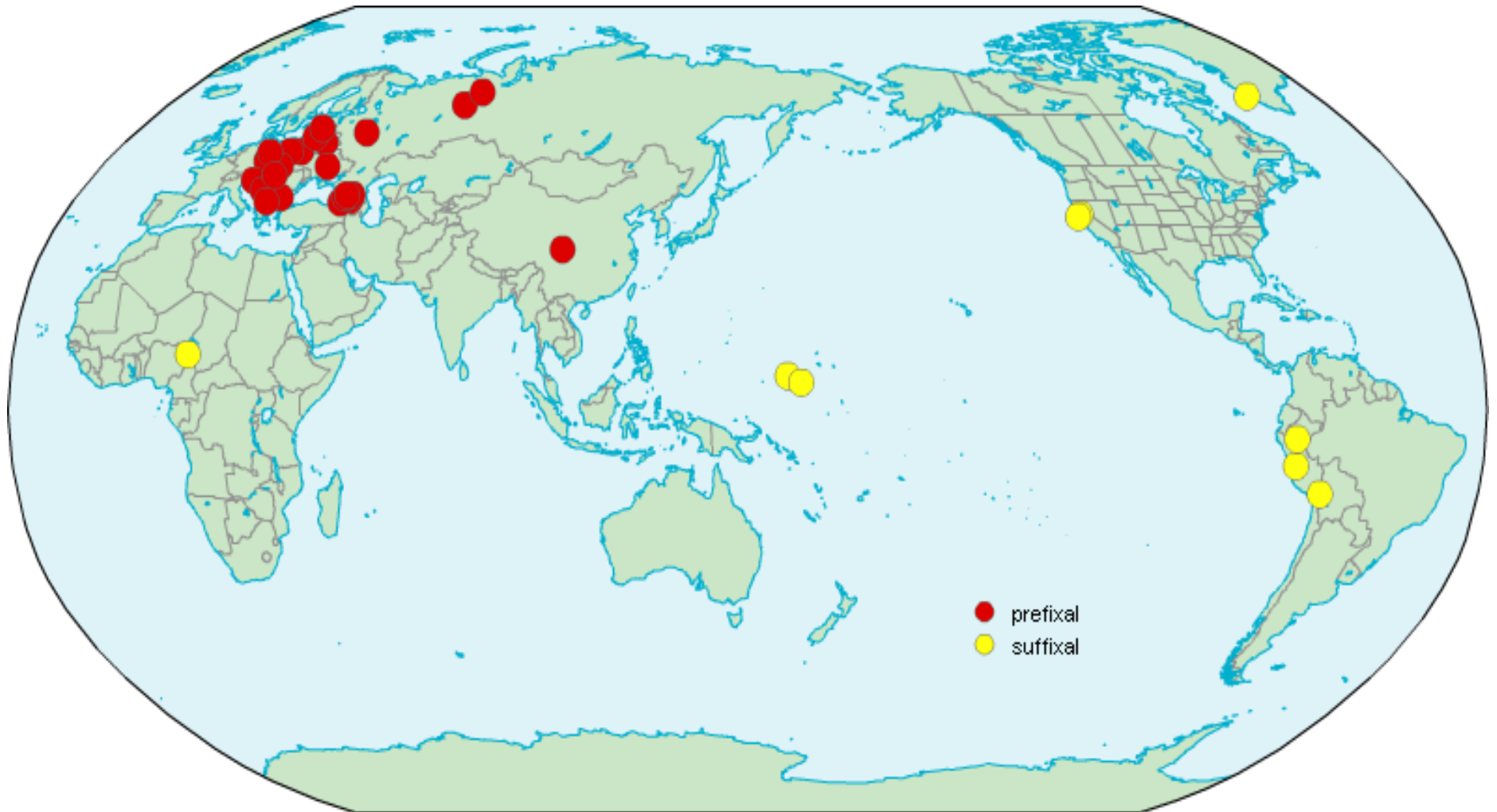
- “perfective” and “imperfective” are not part of the inflectional system but rather (productive) derivational categories;
- simplex verbs are imperfective and denote atelic events (processes and states);
- perfective verbs denoting events, notably, culminations of telic processes, are derived from simplex verbs by means of lexically selective perfectivizing elements such as prefixes (preverbs).

# “Slavic-style” aspect

- Attested mainly in the vicinity of Slavic languages, e.g. Baltic (Lithuanian and Latvian), Hungarian, Ossetic, Kartvelian (Georgian, Svan, Mingrelian, Laz), but also elsewhere, e.g. Sino-Tibetan (Qiangic and rGyalrongic), Micronesian, Chadic (Margi), Quechuan.

Breu 1992, Tomelleri 2009, 2010, Plungian 2011, Arkadiev 2014, 2015, Arkadiev & Shluinsky 2015

# “Slavic-style” aspect



# “Slavic-style” aspect

In the Slavic languages aspectual categories have been considered to be grammaticalized to the greatest extent:

- (secondary) imperfectivization alongside perfectivization (> obligatoriness and paradigmaticization of the aspectual opposition);
- “empty prefixes” (> “semantic bleaching”);
- nearly complementary distribution of aspects across contexts partly defined in terms of morphosyntax rather than semantics (e.g. the use of the imperfective with phasal verbs).

# “Slavic-style” aspect

However, cross-linguistic studies have revealed considerable inner-Slavic variation:

- differences in the productivity of imperfectivization;
- differences in the choice and productivity of “empty prefixes” (if this notion is valid at all, cf. Janda et al. 2013);
- differences in the distribution of aspects in many contexts (> differences in the semantics of aspects among individual languages).

Stunová 1993, Petrušina 2000, Dickey 2000, 2005, 2008,  
Wiemer 2008



# “Slavic-style” aspect

Not all of the features traditionally associated with Slavic aspect are found in the languages with a similar kind of aspectual system, which does not necessarily lend the latter “not grammaticalized”.

Tomelleri 2009, 2010, Arkadiev 2014, 2015

# “Slavic-style” aspect

Grammaticalization of “aspect” as a rather abstract morphosyntactic / morphosemantic **feature** (in the sense of Dahl 2004: Ch. 9) should be distinguished from the grammaticalization of **formal means** of expression of perfectivity and imperfectivity in their different flavours.

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# Contact-induced grammatical change

Two major types of borrowing (transfer):

- MATter borrowing: “direct replication of morphemes and phonological shapes from a source language”;
- PATtern borrowing: “re-shaping of language-internal structures ... it is the patterns of distribution, of grammatical and semantic meaning, and of formal-syntactic arrangement .. that are modelled on an external source”.

Matras & Sakel 2007: 829-830, Sakel 2007, Gardani et al. 2015

# Contact-induced grammatical change

“Slavic-style” aspect in the contact-linguistic perspective:

- Yiddish (Wexler 1964, 1972, Talmy 1982)
- Romani (Ariste 1973, Iglá 1998, Rusakov 2000, 2001, Schrammel 2002, 2005, Kožanov 2011)
- Istro-Romanian (Klepikova 1959, Hurren 1969)
- Lithuanian dialects (Kardelis & Wiemer 2002, Pakerys & Wiemer 2007, Wiemer 2009)

# Contact-induced grammatical change

My aims:

- a synthetic overview of several contact situations with “Slavic-style” aspect in the model language;
- to demonstrate the limits of contact-induced change in the domain of grammatical aspect as distinct from perfectivization by means of preverbs.

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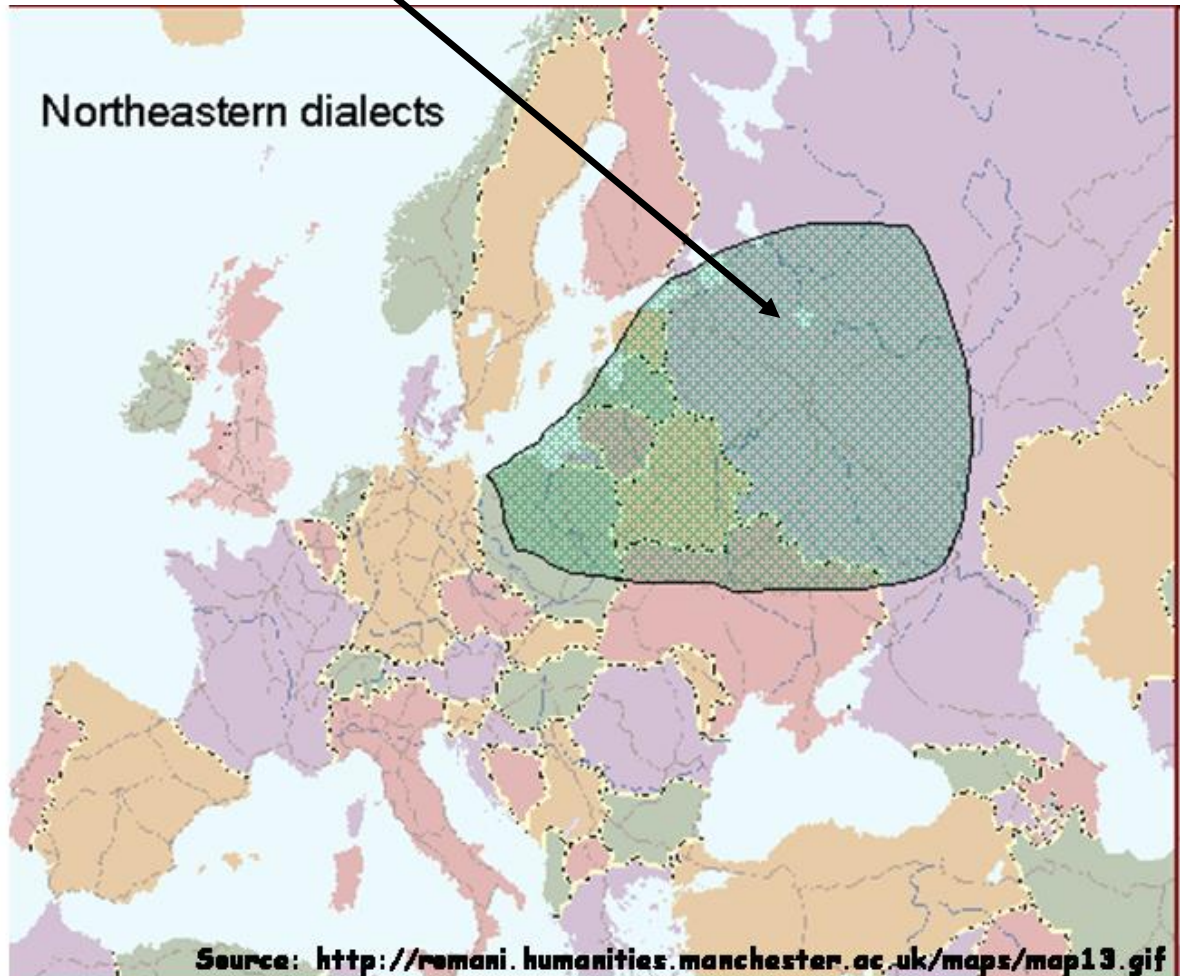
# MAT-borrowing of prefixes

Case 1:

Wholesale borrowing of Slavic, Baltic or Hungarian prefixes into Romani varieties

# MAT-borrowing of prefixes

North Russian Romani



# MAT-borrowing of prefixes

- North-Russian Romani

“lexical prefixes”: *te ot-des* ‘give away’ (~ Rus. *отдать*), *te vy-des* ‘give out’ (~ Rus. *выдать*), *te roz-des* ‘distribute’ (~ Rus. *раздать*)

“aspectual prefixes”: *po-puchne* ‘they asked’ (~ Rus. *попросили*), *u-cherde* ‘s/he stole’ (~ Rus. *украл*)

Rusakov 2001: 315-316

# MAT-borrowing of prefixes

- Latvian Romani

*no-čhindža* ‘cut off’ (~ Ltv. *nogriezt*),

*uz-džinena* ‘get to know’ (~ Ltv. *uzzināt*)

# MAT-borrowing of prefixes

- North-Russian Romani: restructuring of the tense-aspect system (lexeme 'sing', cf. Rus. *петь/спеть*) (Rusakov 2001: 314)

original system		new system	
perfective past <i>bagand'a</i>	imperfective past <i>bagavas</i>	imperfective past <i>bagand'a</i>	perfective past <i>sbagand'a</i>
non-past <i>bagala</i>		(imperfective) present <i>bagala</i>	perfective future <i>sbagala</i>

# MAT-borrowing of prefixes

Rusakov (2001: 315-316): No direct match of the aspectual functions of Russian prefixed vs. simple verbs, rather a degree of free variation.

- simple verbs in perfective contexts

*I avne roma, **u-galyne** so joj buty kerd'a*

'And the Roma came, (they) **discovered** that she worked'

*Nu dote gyne pal latyr te roden i vdrug **galyne**...*

'And then (they) went to look for her, and suddenly **discovered**...' (cf. Rus. *узнали*)

# MAT-borrowing of prefixe

- prefixed verbs in imperfective contexts:

*Joj na gyja i daj la na **ot-dyja***

‘[And so, (they) came to her many times trying to marry her.] She didn’t go and her mother didn’t give (imperf) her (to them)’

(cf. Russian *не отдавала* “(she) didn’t give (imperf)”.)



# MAT-borrowing of prefixes

Case 2:

Wholesale borrowing of Latvian preverbs into Livonian (de Sivers 1971)



# MAT-borrowing of prefixes

- spatial meanings: *lādō* ‘go’: *aiz-lādō* ‘go out’ (~ Ltv *aiziet*), *ap-lādō* ‘go around’ (~ Ltv *apiet*), *ie-lādō* ‘go in’ (~ Ltv. *ieiet*), *nuo-lādō* ‘go up to’ (~ Ltv. *noiet*), *sa-lādō* ‘come together’ (~ Ltv *saiet*)
- non-spatial “lexical” meanings: *kītō* ‘speak’: *at-kītō* ‘reply’ (Ltv. *atbildēt*), *iz-kītō* ‘tell’ (Ltv. *izteikt*)

de Sivers 1971: 28-29, 38

# MAT-borrowing of prefixes

- “aspectual” meanings:

*iz-tiedõ* ‘do to completion’ (~ Ltv. *izdarīt*)

*pa-kītõ* ‘say’ (~ Ltv. *pateikt*)

*nuo-maggõ* ‘sleep for some time’ (~ Ltv. *nogulēt*)

de Sivers 1971: 31, 38, 63

# MAT-borrowing of prefixes

Again, no complementarity of functions (even less so than in Latvian; on the problems of Latvian aspect see Hauzenberga-Šturma 1979, Holvoet 2000):

- prefixed verbs in imperfective contexts:

*Pāva nuo-läeb* ‘Sun is setting’, lit. down-goes (de Sivers 1971: 45)

- simplex verbs in perfective contexts:

*ja teitõ sīe tyõ nei jōvist* ‘and they did the work so well’ (de Sivers 1971: 61)

# MAT-borrowing of prefixes

The cases of both North Russian Romani and Livonian clearly demonstrate:

- Slavic or Baltic prefixes are mostly borrowed as lexical modifiers of verbs and have concrete semantic content (non necessarily spatial);
- when “aspectual” prefixes (or rather aspectual functions of prefixes) are also borrowed, their use does not become obligatory or systematic;
- hence, borrowing even of whole systems of preverbs does not lead to the emergence of grammatical aspect in recipient languages.

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# PAT-borrowing of prefixes

## Eastern Yiddish





# PAT-borrowing of prefixes

Eastern varieties of Yiddish have restructured the inherited Germanic system of preverbs under the influence of Slavic (Wexler 1964, 1972, Talmy 1982 etc.).

Notably, the Yiddish preverbs have acquired (or retained?) the systematic perfectivizing function.

# PAT-borrowing of prefixes

- polysemy copying:

*iber-shraybn* ‘copy, rewrite’ ~ Rus. **переписать**

*iber-ton zikh* ‘change clothes’ ~ Rus. **переодеться**

*iber-vinken zikh* ‘wink to each other’ ~ Rus.

**перемигиваться**

*far-boyen* ‘block by construction’ ~ Rus. **застроить**

*far-tantsn zekh* ‘dance a lot’ ~ Rus. **затанцеваться**

*far-shraybn* ‘write down’ ~ Rus. **записать**

# PAT-borrowing of prefixes

- perfectivizing function:

*Ven zi **hot gekoxt** vetschere, iz bay ir aropgefaln a meser.*

‘While she was cooking supper she dropped a knife’ (simplex verb > imperfective)

*Ven er **hot tse-schnitn** dos broyt, iz im aroysgefaln dos meser fun hant.*

‘After he had cut the bread he dropped the knife’ (prefixed verb > perfective)

# PAT-borrowing of prefixes

- The use of prefixed verbs in perfective contexts is not obligatory in Yiddish, and neither are prefixed verbs banned from imperfective contexts.

***shporn** zey **op** fun di kleyne fardinstn*

‘They save from their small earnings’

*vi a fish **ligt** er **op** gantse shoen untern vaser*

‘He lies under the water like a fish for many hours’

Gold 1999: 75; cf. Aronson 1985

# PAT-borrowing of prefixes

“Whereas the Slavic prefix indicates ... that the end point of a process is actually reached (unless countermanded by a secondary suffix), the Yiddish prefix indicates, rather, that the end point of a process is in view.” (Talmy 1982: 242)

- telicity (actionality) rather than perfectivity (aspect)

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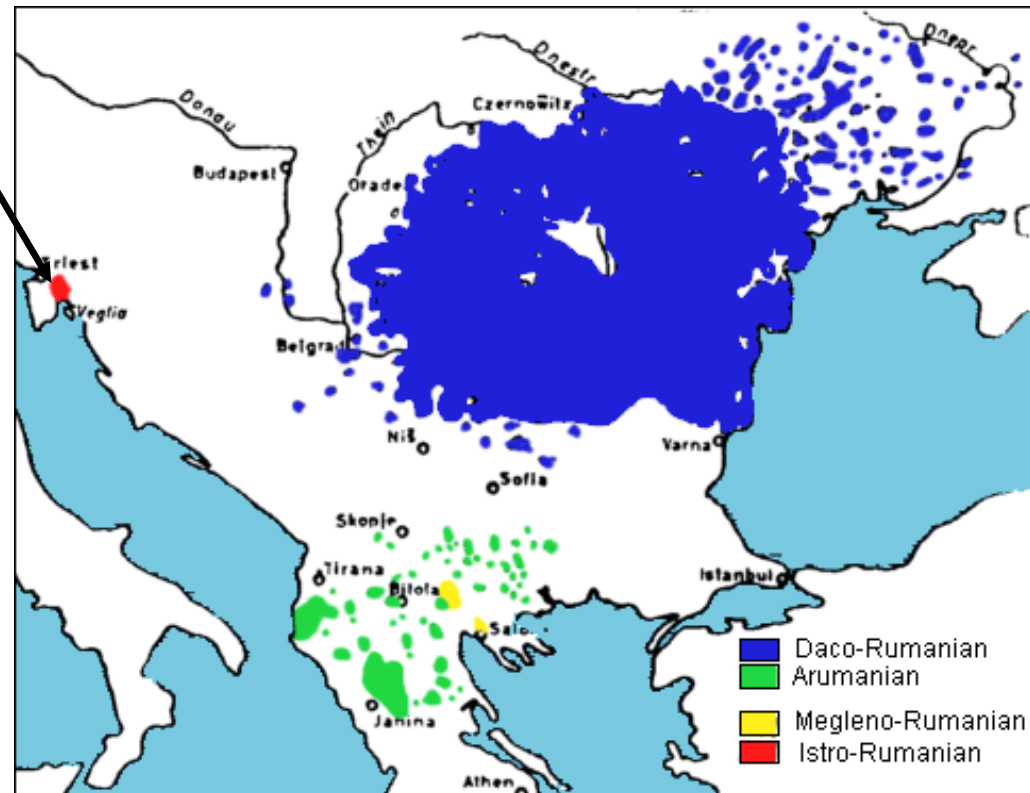
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# Other borrowing phenomena

Istro-Romanian



<http://wiki.verbix.com/Languages/RomanceEastern>



# Other borrowing phenomena

Istro-Romanian is a unique case of a language which has borrowed from Slavic (Čakavian Croatian) not only a system of perfectivizing verbal prefixes, but the imperfectivizing suffix *-va* as well.

Still, the resulting system is far from the Slavic prototype.

# Other borrowing phenomena

- “lexical” preverbs:  
*lega* ‘tie’ ~ ***rezlega*** ‘untie’, cf. Rus. ***развязать***  
*plǎnje* ‘weep’ ~ ***zeplǎnje*** ‘burst into tears’, cf.  
Rus. ***заплакать***
- perfectivizing preverbs:  
*ćira* ~ ***poćira*** ‘have supper’, cf. Rus ***поужинать***  
*durmi* ‘sleep’ ~ ***nadurmi (se)*** ‘sleep enough’, cf.  
Rus. ***наспаться***  
*parti* ~ ***resparti*** ‘divide’, cf. Rus. ***разделить***

Klepikova 1959: 38-45, Hurren 1969

# Other borrowing phenomena

- imperfectivizing suffix:
  - with simplex bases:  
*a mnat* ‘s/he went’ ~ *mnaveit-a* ‘they were going’  
*a scutat-av* ‘s/he heard’ ~ *scutaveit-a* ‘s/he was listening’
  - with prefixed bases:  
*rescl’ide* ‘open!’ ~ *rescl’idaveit-a* ‘s/he kept opening’  
*zedurmit* ‘they fell asleep’ ~ *zedurmiveaia* ‘they were falling asleep’

Klepikova 1959: 47-55, 58-60

# Other borrowing phenomena

Istro-Romanian seems to have a grammaticalized aspectual opposition involving different morphological relations between imperfective and perfective verbs (Hurren 1969):

	imperfective	perfective
prefixation	<i>torče</i> 'spin'	<b><i>potorče</i></b> 'spin'
suffixation	<i>cade</i> 'fall' <b><i>potpisei</i></b> 'sign'	<i>cadavei</i> 'fall' <b><i>potpisivei</i></b> 'sign'
conjugation class	<i>hitei</i> 'throw'	<i>hiti</i> 'throw'
suppletion	<i>be</i> 'drink'	<i>popi</i> 'drink'

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# Other borrowing phenomena

The distribution of simplex vs. suffixal verbs in Istro-Romanian appears to have been remodeled on the basis of the opposition “prefixal perfective ~ suffixal secondary imperfective”, with many simplex verbs recategorized as perfective.

# Other borrowing phenomena

- simplex perfectives of the Romance origin:  
***scunde-te** su pătu lu ia* ‘hide (спрячься) under her bed’  
~ *ancea marancu și me **ascundaves*** ‘I am hiding (прячусь) while they are eating’
- simplex perfectives of the Slavic origin:  
*și-av **piseit** un libru* ‘and wrote (написал) a book’  
~ *ie nu l’a iedănaist an **pisiveit*** ‘he didn’t write (писал) to them for eleven years’

# Other borrowing phenomena

Simplex verbs with the imperfectivizing suffix have not only the iterative, but also the durative/progressive value:

*prevtu jos mai jos **cadaveit*** ‘the priest was falling lower and lower’

*maceha **ăl’-a** zis che mere lemne **tal’avei*** ‘the step-mother told them to go an chop wood’

Klepikova 1959: 50, 52, cf. Hurren 1969: 70



# Other borrowing phenomena

The Istro-Romanian aspectual system:

telic base verbs:

- simplex perfectives ~  
suffixal imperfectives

atelic base verbs:

- simplex imperfectives ~  
prefixal perfectives
- suffixal iteratives

lexical modification by prefixes ~  
suffixal secondary imperfectives/iteratives

# Other borrowing phenomena

Istro-Romanian has borrowed from Slavic both the formal means of expressing perfectivity and imperfectivity and the more abstract aspectual opposition itself, but the resulting system is markedly different from the Slavic ones, to the extent that Slavic originally imperfective verbal loans have been reinterpreted as perfective.

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# Conclusions

- Borrowing of both matter (perfectivizing prefixes and, more rarely, the imperfectivizing suffix) and pattern (polysemy and the perfectivizing function of prefixes) from languages with “Slavic-style” aspect into languages with very different verbal systems is a well-attested phenomenon.

# Conclusions

- Even extensive borrowing does not lead to the creation in the recipient languages of aspectual categories grammaticalized to an extent similar to those of the donor languages.
- “[R]eplica categories are generally less grammaticalized than the corresponding model categories” (Heine 2012: 132)

# Conclusions

Cf. the conspicuous absence of verbal aspect from the well-known list of “balkanisms”:

- extensive language contact and influence of non-Slavic languages does not seem to have had any effect on the development of the “Slavic-style” aspect in Bulgarian and Macedonian;
- neither have aspectual systems of the latter served as models for replication in the non-Slavic Balkan languages.

Aronson 1981, Rusakov 2007: 86-87, Rusakov & Sobolev 2008: 28-29

# Conclusions

- Even in the case of “extreme” borrowing as in Istro-Romanian, the resulting system, arguably highly grammaticalized, is a result of language-internal development and refunctionalization of borrowed material, rather than a direct “copy” of the Slavic system.
- Perfect cross-language alignment of highly grammaticalized morphosyntactic patterns is at best infrequent even in cases of “metatypy” (Ross 2007).



# Conclusions

Both matter and pattern borrowing primarily involve formally transparent and functionally loaded elements

- Aktionsarten (including telicity) rather than highly abstract aspectual oppositions;
- lexically and semantically, rather than morphosyntactically, determined categories.

Weinreich 1953: 34-35, Winford 2003: 91-92, Gardani 2008

Thank you for your attention!

Grazie per l'attenzione!

Спасибо за внимание!

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