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PERFECTIVE OF DYNAMIC VERBS VS PERFECT

This paper is intended as an attempt to describe English equivalents of Polish perfective and imperfective verbs. The analysis of Polish sentences containing perfective dynamic verbs and their English counterparts points to the fact that in dynamic verbs perfect can occur as equivalent of perfective, whereas in the case of stative verbs, perfect is found in equivalent of imperfective predicates. In the present paper I will account for the relation between dynamic perfectives and perfect.

Comrie (1976) defines aspect as "different ways of viewing the internal temporal constituency of a situation" and distinguishes three aspectual oppositions: perfective-imperfective, habitual-continuous, and progressive-nonprogressive; he also regards perfect as an aspect which composes the aspectual opposition with the non-perfect meaning. Subsequently, he assumes that if a language has special verbs which are capable of presenting the totality of a situation referred to without reference to its internal temporal constituency, i. e., which have perfective meaning, the language has perfective aspect. Thus, Polish has perfective aspect but English does not. Moreover, neither English progressive-nonprogressive nor perfect-nonperfect is comparable as a whole to perfective-imperfective of the Polish language. Nevertheless, on the basis of semantic classification of Polish and English verbs, some regularities of reflecting perfective aspect of Polish verbs in English can be observed.

Thus, the analysis of English predicates corresponding to the Polish ones with dynamic perfective verbs allows the gen-

eralisation / that English equivalents of these Polish forms can be indicated by either nonperfect excluding progressive aspect and habitual meaning or perfect and the type of relation is conditioned by the adverbial or the environment of a given predicate. The first group of examples to be considered consists of three pairs of sentences with dynamic perfective predicates with the future reference. Predicates of (1a) and (1b) represent the activity verbs, the verbs of (3a) and (3b) are members of the subgroup of process verbs, and the predicates of (5a) and (5b) represent transitional event verbs.

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| (1a) <i>Napiszę</i> ten list jutro. | (2a) <i>I will write</i> the letter tomorrow. |
| (1b) <i>Napiszę</i> ten list do jutra. | (2b) <i>I will have written</i> the letter by tomorrow. |
| (3a) On <i>zmeni się</i> jak wróci ojciec. | (4a) He <i>will change</i> when his father comes back. |
| (3b) Pogoda <i>zmeni się</i> przed wieczorem. | (4b) The weather <i>will have changed</i> by evening. |
| (5a) Nasz gość <i>wkrótce przybędzie</i> . | (6a) Our guest <i>will soon arrive</i> . |
| (5b) Nasz gość <i>przybędzie</i> przed ósmą. | (6b) Our guest <i>will have arrived</i> by eight. |

In both (1a) and (1b) the same future perfective form occurs. *Napiszę* (to write + future + perfective) of (1a) has as its equivalent the nonperfect verb phrase *will write* (2a), whereas the English predicate corresponding to *napiszę* of (1b) is in the perfect aspect (2b). Likewise, the process perfective of (3a) and (3b) *zmeni się* (to change + future + perfective) and the transitional event perfective of (5a) and (5b) *przybędzie* (to arrive + future + perfective) have both nonperfect (4a and 6a) and perfect (4b and 6b) English equivalents.

To account for the data let's first consider the general definitions of perfect aspect formulated by Comrie (1976) as follows: "Perfect refers to a past situation which has present relevance", or in other words, "perfect indicates the continuing present relevance of a past situation". Although in both statements Comrie refers to a "past situation" and "the present moment", in the body of his book he interprets the "past situ-

ation as "prior situation", and the "present moment" as "the time of the state resulting from a prior situation". Subsequently, he defines perfect in the past tense as the aspect "expressing a relation between a past state and an even earlier situation". Likewise, in the Future Tense perfect is said to express "a relation between a future state and a situation prior to it", without any specification of the absolute time of that prior action.

Thus, sentences (1a), (3a) and (5a) are statements about actions that will be performed in the future and the adverbials indicate the time in which the action will be performed, but they do not contain any information about the time in which the fact of performing the action has continuing relevance, wherefore these sentences have nonperfect equivalents. The adverbials of (1b), (3b) and (5b) do not indicate the time of performing the action but the time of the relevance of the prior situation, for which reason their English equivalents are in the perfect aspect. From the above discussion it may be inferred that if a dynamic perfective verb is accompanied by the adverbial pointing to the time in which the totality of the situation the verb refers to has relevance, this verb indicates perfect aspect, whereas, the same verb without such a context has nonperfect meaning.

There remains, however, a question of the features of perfectives which make it possible for the aspect to indicate perfect meaning. To answer this, let's consider the following pairs of sentences:

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| (7a) <i>wyżebrał</i> trochę jedzenia
i nie jest już głodny. | (8a) He <i>has begged</i> some food and
he is not hungry any longer. |
| (7b)* <i>wyżebrywał</i> trochę jedzenia
i nie jest już głodny. | (8b) He <i>begged</i> (imperfective)
some food and he is not
hungry any longer. |
| (9a) <i>Pogoda zmieniła się</i> i teraz
świeci słońce. | (10a) The weather <i>has changed</i>
and the sun is shining
now. |

* Indicates a deviant sentence.

- (9b)* *Pogoda zmieniała się i teraz świeci słońce* (10b) The weather *changed* (imperfective) and the sun is shining now.
- (11a) *Stracił pracę i teraz musi szukać nowej.* (12a) He *has lost* his job and now he has to look for a new one.
- (11b)* *Tracił pracę i teraz musi szukać nowej.* (12b) He *lost* (imperfective) his job and now he has to look for a new one.

Both predicates of each pair are accompanied by the context indicating the relevance of the prior situation to the present moment. The first observation is that all (a) examples are fully acceptable and grammatical Polish sentences, whereas, in the case of (b)* examples, they are awkward. The awkwardness stems from the fact that the second part of each of the sentences points to a certain present situation which is a result of a previous action. Even if the previous situation is not known, a sentence of the type *Nie jest już głodny* (He is not hungry any longer) or *Teraz świeci słońce* (The sun is shining now) is understood as a result of something that has happened. Therefore, if a statement (X) is to be coordinated with another statement (Y), and the (X) statement expresses some result, then the condition of proper relation is satisfied if (Y) indicates the cause of the result. Thus, in the sentence **Wyżebrał trochę jedzenia i nie jest już głodny* the former part is not an explicit explanation of the latter statement *nie jest już głodny* (he is not hungry any longer), because the fact that somebody tried to get a meal does not mean that he got it. In other words, the statement *Wyżebrał trochę jedzenia* (He begged some food) has no relevance to the present situation indicated by *nie jest już głodny* (he is not hungry any longer), wherefore, the conclusion may be drawn that imperfectives of dynamic verbs do not indicate perfect aspect, i. e. perfect predicates do not function as their English equivalents.

The (a) examples satisfy the condition of proper relation and the relation is that of cause and result - the interpretation of (7a) is: *nie jest już głodny bo wyżebrał trochę jedzenia* (He is not hungry any longer because he has begged some food). The

cause and result relationship is possible because the perfective aspect not only refers to the totality of a given situation but also points to the resultative phase of this situation and this property of perfective aspect seems to comply with one of the manifestations of perfect; namely, perfect of result. Comrie (1976) regards perfect of result as "one of the clearest manifestation of the present relevance of a past situation" in which "a present state is referred to as being the result of some past situation". Thus the conclusion that can be drawn is that in the case of dynamic situation only perfective is capable of indicating perfect because it indicates the result of a given situation.

It should be borne in mind, however, that momentary situation can be expressed by both perfective and imperfective verbs in the same context pointing to some result. The examples are:

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| | (14a') | She <i>has hit</i> her hand
against the table and
now her finger is broken. | |
| (13a) | <i>Uderzyła</i> | (14a") | She <i>hit</i> her hand against
the table and her finger
is broken. |
| | <i>ręką w stół</i>
<i>i ma złamany palec.</i> | | |
| (13b) | <i>Uderzała</i> | (14b) | She <i>kept hitting</i> her hand
against the table and
her finger is broken. |
| | <i>ręką w stół</i>
<i>i ma złamany palec.</i> | | |

Both (13a) and (13b) are formed on the same principle as sentences (7a, b), (9a, b) and (11a, b); the former part indicates the possible cause and the latter points to the result. However, (7b), (9b) and (11b) are deviant and (8b), (10b) and (12b) are acceptable in informal style only, whereas, (13b) is acceptable. Moreover, (7a), (9a) and (11a) require perfect in their English equivalents, whereas, in the case of (13a) both (14a') and (14a") can function as English counterparts. Specific semantic properties of momentary verbs which may be crucial point in accounting for the data still need careful analysis.

SELECTED REFERENCES

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DOKONANE CZASOWNIKI DYNAMICZNE A PERFECT

W artykule niniejszym podjęta jest próba określenia wspólnych cech aspektu dokonanego (*Perfective*) czasowników dynamicznych (*Dynamic Verbs*) języka polskiego i perfektu (*Perfect*) występującego w angielskich odpowiednikach tych czasowników.

Analiza zdań polskich z formami dokonanymi i niedokonanymi tych czasowników i ich angielskich odpowiedników oraz porównanie definicji obydwu aspektów podanej przez Comrie'ego (1976) pozwalają wnioskować, że w określonych kontekstach aspekt dokonany, poprzez wskazywanie na rezultatywny charakter danej akcji, spełnia takie funkcje jakie spełnia perfect (*Perfect*) w języku angielskim. Wskazany jest również fakt, że w przypadku czasowników punktowych (*Momentary Verbs*) formy dokonana i niedokonana są poprawne w kontekstach, w których mogą występować tylko formy dokonane pozostałych czasowników dynamicznych. Jednocześnie nie ustalono sytuacji takich, które wykluczałyby użycie innego aspektu niż perfect (*Perfect*) w angielskich odpowiednich zdaniach polskich z dokonanymi formami tych czasowników.