Doing without the progressive present: How present tense hypoanalyzed via pluractionality and modality

Björn Wiemer[1], Anna Socka[2]

[1] *University of Mainz,* [2] *University of Gdańsk*

wiemerb@uni-mainz.de, anna.socka@ug.edu.pl

In North (= West+East) Slavic languages, the present-tense stem of perfective (pfv.) verbs has, by default, acquired future meaning (= reference to episodic eventualities posterior to speech time), but it still widely occurs in contexts which can be dubbed 'inactual present', namely: (i) habitual, (ii) conditional, (iii) dispositional or circumstantial modal meanings. Most of these uses were discussed by Haspelmath (1998), who argued – on a variety of unrelated languages – that they represent residual functions of earlier present tenses. The ousting of present-tense forms from the domain of present is seen as a push-out effect caused by new forms able to denote ongoing eventualities (progressive presents). Croft (2000: 126–130) qualified such instances as hypoanalysis. Concomitantly, Haspelmath rejected alternative attempts at explaining the polysemy (or overlap) of habitual and future functions of pfv. presents which tried to connect them as instantiations of some more general "irrealis" meaning, which "is neither semantically coherent nor cross-linguistically consistent" (1998: 48).

However, Haspelmath's reasoning leaves empirical and conceptual problems particularly with respect to (North) Slavic. First, the move of pfv. present tense forms out of the present domain was probably itself a trigger for the spread of imperfective (ipfv.) stems (marked by suffixes) able to denote ongoing eventualities; this amounts to a pull-in effect with an inverse cause-effect relationship (Wiemer & Seržant 2017: 270¬272). Second, for newer ipfv. stems progressive meanings were probably acquired later than pluractional meanings. Third, habitual and conditional meanings show an intrinsic relation to dispositional-circumstantial readings, which often cannot be disentangled in discourse tokens, but which allow for extensions into epistemic readings (Sonnenhauser 2009). Fourth, these observations perfectly fit with observations made by Šluinskij (2005: 153–177) on a wider range of languages, so that Haspelmath's qualification cited above loses ground.

We show how diachronic data from Slavic justify a developmental path from futurate presents into the future proper, which is alternative to the path proposed by Haspelmath (1998). Moreover, we demonstrate how pfv. present-tense forms create a coherent semantic network which encompasses the usage types under (i–iii) as well as epistemic and future meanings, but does without an intermediate link of the progressive present. Contemporary Polish will be used to illustrate how a corresponding semantic map works not only for diachronic data, but also for contemporary stages of Slavic languages.

References: Croft, W. (2000). Explaining Language Change: An Evolutionary Approach. Harlow: Longman. Haspelmath, M. (1998). The semantic development of old presents (New futures and subjunctives without grammaticalization). Diachronica 15(1), 29–62. Sonnenhauser, B. (2008). The 'Potential Reading' in Russian. Russian Linguistics 32(3), 185–201. Šluinskij, A. B. (2005). Tipologija predikatnoj množestvennosti: količestvennye aspektual'nye značenija [Typology of pluractionality: quantificational aspectual meanings]. Moscow (unpubl. PHD thesis). Wiemer, B. & I. A. Seržant (2017). Diachrony and typology of Slavic aspect: What does morphology tell us? In: Bisang, W. & A. Malchukov (eds.): Unity and diversity in grammaticalization scenarios. Berlin: Language Science Press, 230–307.

AG 7