

Anna Młynarczyk

Aspectual Pairing in Polish

The received view on Slavic aspect is that it is intrinsically complex, and that there is little hope of discerning any substantial regularity. We argue that this view is mistaken. We argue that the vast majority of Polish verbs really do come in aspectual pairs and that far from being a mysterious process, aspectual pairing in Polish is simple and regular. We introduce a classification of Polish verbs that pins down the mechanism of aspectual pairing in Polish.

Our classification is formationally-driven: we divide Polish verbs into basic five classes on the basis of the patterns of aspectual affixation they enter into (we call affixes used for aspectual purposes 'formants'). But in spite of its essentially formal nature, our aspectual classification reveals considerable semantic regularity in the Polish verb system. Indeed, the classification induces temporal distinctions on Polish verbs, distinctions that look rather like Vendler-style distinctions. We formalise the distinctions with the tools of modal semantics.

We describe the evolution of the Polish aspectual system, and show how our classification could have emerged diachronically. We present the history of the study of aspect and Aktionsart and locate where the approach to Polish verb pairs introduced in this thesis differs from what the reader will find in the various literatures on aspect. We also relate the ideas of this thesis to the ideas the reader can find in the modern approaches to Slavic aspect written in the post-Chomskian tradition.

We hope that the work presented in this thesis will be useful to researchers interested in aspect from both the Germanic and Slavic traditions.

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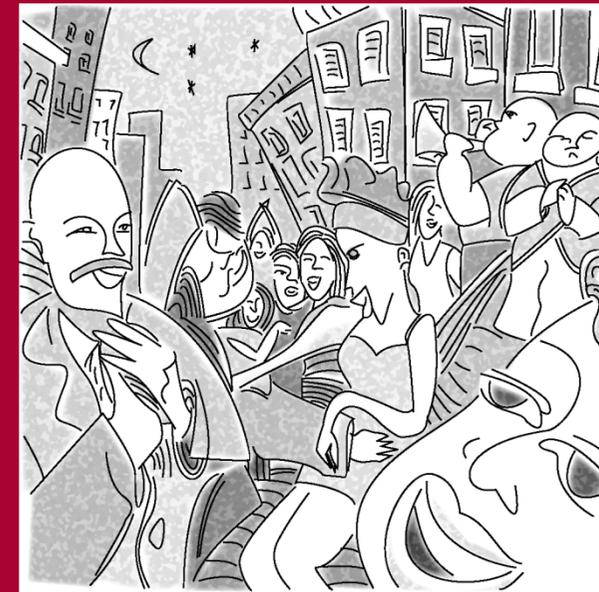
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