

## A corpus-based case study of aspect use in infinitives in Russian as compared with infinitives and corresponding *da*-constructions in some Balkan languages

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In the most comprehensive comparative account of Slavic aspect to date, Dickey (2000), two important verb forms are left unaccounted for: the imperative and the infinitive. The imperative was dealt with in Benacchio (2010), Waldenfels (2012) and Alvestad (2013). Now it is time the infinitive — and the corresponding *da*-constructions — get their fair share of attention too. To accommodate this need is one of the aims of this paper. Thus, in this paper I present an ongoing corpus-based study of, first, the use of aspect in infinitives in Russian in comparison with infinitives and *da*-constructions in Croatian, Serbian and Slovene and *da*-constructions in Bulgarian and Macedonian, and, second, the use of infinitives *versus da*-constructions in Croatian, Serbian and Slovene. The study is based on an examination of two parallel-annotated novels in the Parasol<sup>1</sup> corpus. An example is given below, where, first, the Russian original is presented followed by its correspondents in the other languages in the study.

- (1) a. Ru: *Ты говоришь, товарищ Ермаченко, что здесь надо будет драться, а я думаю — надо утром **отходить**<sup>IPF</sup>.* (ParaSol. Ostrovskij: *Kak zakaljalas' stal'*)  
“Comrade Ermačenko, you are saying that we will have to fight here, but I think that it’s necessary **to leave** in the morning.”  
b. Hr: (...) *A ja mislim da ujutro treba **otići**<sup>PF</sup>.*  
c. Sr: (...) *a ja mislim da ujutru treba **otići**<sup>PF</sup>.*  
d. Sn: (...) *jaz pa mislim, da moramo zjutraj **odriniti**<sup>PF</sup>.*  
e. Mk: (...) *a jas mislam - utre treba **da si odime**<sup>IPF</sup>.*  
f. Bg: (...) *a нък аз мисля, че утре сутрин трябва **да отстъпим**<sup>PF</sup>.*

In light of existing literature, one could hypothesize that i) in the infinitive and corresponding *da*-constructions, the freedom of choice is significant as far as aspect use is concerned (see, e.g., Galton (1976)), and ii) the East-West divide in aspect use (IPF being the predominant aspect in East-Slavic and PF in West-Slavic, see, e.g. Dickey (2000)), can be observed in the infinitive and corresponding *da*-constructions as well. I show, however, that i) must be refuted and ii) must be modified: For example, when only non-negated telic predicates are taken into account, the share of PF infinitives in Russian is 85% (as opposed to 40% for non-negated imperatives, cf. Alvestad (2013)). The share is identical for Croatian (which uses PF in 55% of non-negated imperatives, op. cit.), irrespective of whether an infinitive or a *da*-construction is used. Against this background, the main questions I will address in this paper are, first, what the shares are for the other languages in the study and, second, how we can account for the findings in a formal theoretical framework.

The picture of how aspect is used in the Slavic languages is not complete until infinitives, and the corresponding *da*-constructions, are accounted for, and this corpus-based investigation should be a good starting point.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.slavist.de>. See Waldenfels (2006, 2011, 2012).