Biaspectuals Revisited

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ABSTRACT:

Biaspectuals Revisited. The article deals with (or rather begins with) Czech biaspectual verbs. Although biaspectuals (sometimes referred to as aspectual homonyms) distinguish between perfective vs. imperfective meaning, there is nothing in their morphological makeup to signal this meaning distinction. To determine the aspect of a biaspectual, i.e. to disambiguate its aspectual homonymy, biaspectuals are sometimes synonymously substituted by verbs whose morphological makeup does signal their aspect; the biaspectuals are then considered perfective or imperfective (used perfectively vs. imperfectively) depending on the aspect of their substituents. The article demonstrates that this method is deficient: it is not necessarily conclusive. To demonstrate this, the following observations were made and conclusions drawn on Czech aspect and aspect in general. i. Despite the fact that aspect is thought of as an obligatory *verbal* category in Czech, it is not a matter of the verb alone, but rather of a larger linguistic expression. The mutual morphological makeup of the verb is only one of the many factors/exponents which ("in cooperation") determine the aspectual interpretation of the respective linguistic expression. Some of these factors are identifiable as aspectual exponents in the expression itself (for example tense, verb complements, adverbial verb complements among them), others are beyond its scope, i.e. they are part of the (situational) context in which the expression is used. ii. Linguistic expression can be interpreted as perfective, imperfective, aspectually unspecific or the aspectual distinction can be irrelevant for it — despite that, aspect is considered to be an *obligatory* category. iii. Furthermore, the morphological imperfective can be used to co-express perfectivity, and the morphological perfective can be used to refer to an imperfectively conceived process/event. Therefore, due to this and points i. and ii. above, the verb IS NOT inherently perfective or imperfective, it is USED perfectively, imperfectively, or in an aspectually unspecific way.

KEY WORDS:

aspect, biaspectual verbs, Czech aspect, imperfective, morphological aspect, obligatory category (distinction), perfective, substitution (method), verbal categories

The article has been prompted by *Impact of tense on the interpretation of bi-aspectual verbs in Czech*, published by J. Chromý (2014) in this journal. Nevertheless, its goal is to contribute to study of aspect in Czech as well as in general and touch upon some issues of methodology in linguistics. The core issue of the article is the noetic viability of the substitution method in the study of biaspectual verbs in Czech.[1]

WHAT IS ARGUED WITH

There exist biaspectual verbs (biaspectuals)[2] in Czech. The following are their specifics: There is no exponent in their morphological makeup which would signal aspect of the biaspectual verb. A biaspectual can be used in the perfective sense as well as in the imperfective sense and in most instances, i.e. with few exceptions, biaspectuals are loan words. Examples: *skórovat* [score], *mobilizovat* [mobilize], *demonstrovat* [demonstrate], *rezervovat* [reserve], *explodovat* [explode], etc. It is assumed that every use of a biaspectual is either perfective or imperfective, i.e. every use of a biaspectual is aspectually specific.

The aspect of a biaspectual use can be identified through a substitution of the biaspectual by a "synonymous" Czech verb, which distinguishes the aspect, i.e. is either perfective or imperfective. On the basis of such a substitution, a conclusion is made about aspectual use of the biaspectual under investigation. For instance: *skórovat* [score] > *dávat gól* [score-*imperfective*][3] / *trefovat branku* [hit-*imperfective* the goal],[4] resp. *dát gól* [score-*perfective*] / *trefit branku* [hit-*perfective* the goal]; *identifikovat* [identify] > *označit* [mark, denote-*perfective*] / *poznat* [identify-*imperfective*], resp. *označovat* [mark, denote-*perfective-perfective*], *poznávat* [identify-*perfective*], etc. (The verb preceding the arrow is biaspectual, the verb following it is its Czech aspectually specific "synonym".) The conclusion drawn is: A biaspectual substituted by a perfective is used as perfective, if substituted by an imperfective, it is used as imperfective.

ASPECT AS AN OBLIGATORY CATEGORY IN CZECH

One of the assumptions listed above is that each verb is always used either perfectively or imperfectively (if it is not a perfective or imperfective tantum; see below). Speakers thus have to decide the aspect every time they use a verb. In this sense, aspect is considered an obligatory category in Czech.

As simple as this sounds, we have to treat obligatory categories (distinctions) with some caution, because an obligatory category/distinction does not always have to be decided by the language user.

This begins on the level of phonology. Voicing correlation pervades the Czech phonological system systematically. The opposition "voiced–voiceless" is perceived as belonging to the core (as opposed to the periphery) of the Czech phonological system.[5]

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nature of capacitives and verbs such as *posedět*, and *popít*. These comments will not fall under the table, so to speak. I plan to return them in more detail on another occasion.

2   Cf. also Veselý (2008) who speaks about *aspectual homonyms* or about *obouvidá slovesa* [biaspectuals verbs].

3   If necessary, the English translation of Czech examples include information about morphological aspect of the translated verb. It is printed in italics.

4   I.e. the opposite of *miss the goal*.

5   See Vachek (1966; 1968) and Kučera (1961).

In this sense, the distinction "voiced–voiceless" is considered obligatory in Czech. Nevertheless, the phoneme /ř/ is represented in Czech by voiced as well as voiceless segments (*keř* [bush] — voiceless, *řípa* [beet] — voiced; *věřme* [let's believe] — voiced or voiceless) and the voicing of /ř/ is never distinctive/phonological.

Czech distinguishes obligatorily singular vs. plural of nouns, i.e. a noun is either in singular or plural form. Nevertheless, there exist nouns that do not express this distinction, namely uncountable names (mass nouns: *voda* [water], *mléko* [milk], *cukr* [sugar], *hlína* [soil, clay] etc.; collective nouns: *listí* [foliage], *cukroví* [sweets], *korespondence* [correspondence] etc.; some abstract nouns: *krása* [beauty], *něžnost* [tenderness], *násilnost* [violence] etc.).[6] In these instances, the distinction of the "mathematical" nominal number[7] does not apply.[8] We are thus in a situation when a distinction which is considered obligatory in Czech does not always have to be relevant.

In some cases, the lack of obligatoriness of nominal number is not given by the noun itself, but rather by its use. For example, it is not clear from the sentence *V Beskydech se vyskytuje medvěd* [The bear occurs / is found in the Beskydy Mountains] how many bears there are in the Beskydy Mountains, despite the fact that *medvěd* is singular.[9] These sentences are sometimes treated as "marked use" of the singular *medvěd* [bear] and the core of the statement is that the bear does occur in the Beskydy mountains: The nominal number in the respective communication is thus simply irrelevant.

Similar phenomena to the case of the "voice–voiceless" and "singular–plural" distinctions mentioned above can be identified in Czech verbal aspect. Besides verbs which distinguish aspect (*dělat* [do-*imperfective*] — *udělat* [do-*perfective*]), there exist also verbs that do not signal aspectual value: *být* [be], *mít* [have], *smět* [may, be allowed], *sedět* [sit, be sitting] etc., *skórovat* [score], *identifikovat* [identify] etc. Some of these verbs are labeled as imperfective tantum (*sedět* [sit, be sitting], *vidět* [see], *milovat* [love], *smět* [may, be allowed], *mít* [have] etc., sometimes referred to as verbs of state), they do not have a perfective counterpart. Some verbs are called perfective tantum (*uvidět* [catch sight], *rozpršet se* [start to rain], *zakřičet* [shout out], *vydržet* [hold out, stand], *havarovat* [crash], *varovat* [warn] etc.),[10] they do not have an imperfective counterpart.[11] Another group of verbs, which stand out from the network

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6   Cf. for instance MČ2 (1986, pp. 42n). Propria are left aside intentionally.

7   For the notion of mathematical nominal number see for instance Kuryłowicz (1965, p. 70).

8   A different situation is found in nouns such as *ragú* [ragout], there is no number exponent on the noun itself, but the nominal number is identifiable in the noun congruents.

9   For some native speakers the "marked use" of singular noun does not always work. They consider *medvěd* [bear] to be singular, i.e. for them, there is only one bear in the Beskydy mountains. Should there be more of them, the plural *medvědi* [bears] would have to be used.

10 The last two verbs are, of course, loanwords etymologically, but from point of view of synchrony they are well integrated into the Czech lexicon, i.e. they tend not to be considered loanwords by native speakers anymore.

11 Cf. for instance with MČ2 (1986, pp. 183n).

of "perfective–imperfective" oppositions are biaspectual verbs (biaspectuals; *obou-
vidá slovesa*). As mentioned earlier, they are mostly loan verbs, but there do also exist
Czech biaspectuals: *jmenovat koho čím* [appoint somebody as], *zvěstovat* [announce],
věnovat [donate], *věnovat se* [devote to something, occupy with something, engage in
something], *obětovat* [sacrifice something], *obětovat se* [sacrifice oneself] etc. (MČ2,
1986, p. 184). All these instances breach the 100% obligatoriness of aspect in Czech.
Nevertheless, the obligatoriness of aspect can also be violated in other ways.

In some communication, the aspect simply does not matter, i.e. it does not matter
whether a perfective or imperfective form of the verb is used, for instance: *jak jsou
tyto kategorie vymezeny/vymezovány v lingvistice* [how these categories are defined-*per-
fective* / defined-*imperfective* in linguistics].[12] From point of view of the message com-
municated in the given genre — a presentation in linguistics — the difference *vy-
mezeny* [defined-*perfective*] — *vymezovány* [defined-*imperfective*] does not carry any
weight. Another example: *lidský život se — jak vidno — dá zredukovat na pár klíčových
informací* [human life — as can be seen — can be reduced-*perfective* to few key infor-
mation bits] (p. 11)[13] is substitutable per *lidský život se — jak vidno — dá redukovat na
pár klíčových informací* [human life — as it shows — can be reduced-*imperfective* to few
key pieces of information] without any change in the content of the communication
(both sentences state possibility, they are used in a gnomic way). Similar are these
related sentences *tato kniha uvedené/uváděné klišé nepopírá* [this book does not deny
the stated-*perfective* / stated-*imperfective* cliché] (p. 12) or the sentences *v dopise, který
posílá/poslal Nezvalovi z Brna před začátkem prázdnin čteme…* [in the letter, which he is
sending / sends to Nezval to Brno before the vacations period, we (can) read…] (p. 35).
The structural tradition would probably call this neutralization of the aspectual op-
position. But the fact that the phenomenon is terminologically "managed" does not
explain it, it merely assigns a name to it in the structuralist paradigm.

Sometimes an imperfective verbal form is used to relate a perfective meaning. It
is quite common in sentences like *tu knihu jsem (už) četla* [I read-*imperfective-past* /
I have read the book (already)], *ten film jsem (už) viděla* [I saw-*imperfective* / I have seen
the movies (already)], *tu esej jsem už psala* [I wrote-*imperfective* the essay (already)]
etc. Another example of a similar kind is a sign on a doctor's office door (at the hos-
pital Na Homolce): *neklepejte, sestra vychází* [do not knock, the nurse comes out-*im-
perfective*] — morphologically, *vychází* [she comes out / is coming out] is imperfect.

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12 In both instances, i.e. whether the perfective (*vymezeny* [defined-*perfective*]) or imperfec-
    tive (*vymezovány* [defined-*imperfective*]) form of the verb is used, the expression refers to
    a state. States exhibit properties usually linked with imperfectives such as extension in
    time, durativity, i.e. unbounded duration (Croft, 2012, p. 34), as well as collocation with
    expressions as *pořád* [all the time, always, constantly], *stále* [all the time, always/perma-
    nently], *dokud* [as long as], which are customarily used with imperfectives (Kořánová et
    al., p. 58; Starý Kořánová, 2015; see also below).
13 This as well as the two following examples are quoted from the novel *Básník / román o Iva-
    nu Blatném* [Poet / a novel about Ivan Blatný] by M. Reiner (Torst, Praha 2014). The page
    numbers refer to the quoted edition of the novel. In all instances, the verb in front of the
    slash is the original and the verb following it is synonymously substitutable.

Czech imperfectives can also express another aspectual meaning, namely iterativity. In the given example, an imperfective interpretation of *vychází* [she comes out / is coming out] is impossible — the door is closed and no nurse is momentarily coming out. The sign thus only has an iterative meaning and from the point of view of the "perfectivity–imperfectivity" distinction, the verb is used/understood in the perfective way: the sign actually communicates that the nurse will have indeed come out, it is thus synonymous with *neklepejte, sestra vyjde* [do not knock, the nurse will come out-*perfective*].[14]

To express imperfective meaning through a morphologically perfective verb is also possible. That is, there are instances when no completion of an event/process (*completed action*: Bybee et al., 1994, p. 54; Bybee, 1985, p. 142; *completive*: Givón, 1984, p. 276; *vědomí o dokonání* děje [awareness of event completion]: Trávníček, 1923, p. 3; *děj skonaný* [event completed]: Trávníček, 1923, p. 292; *děj dokonaný* [event concluded], *dokonaná činnost* [concluded activity]: Kopečný, 1962, p. 9), no *terminal boundary* of the event/process (Givón, 1984, pp. 272, 276–278), no *temporal boundedness* of it (Bybee et al., 1994, pp. 53, 83, 301), no perception of the event/process as a whole (Dostál, 1954, p. 16; *děj celkový, souborný* [total, all encompassing event]: Kopečný, 1962, p. 9), no achievement of any goal of the event/process (MČ2, 1986, p. 181), i.e. no perfectivity is part of the message or would be implied in it.[15]

Let's analyze the following example: *aby tolik Číňanů požádalo Česko o azyl, je neobvyklé* [for so many Chinese to have applied-*perfective* for asylum, is unusual] (*Hospodářské noviny*, Aug. 2nd, 2016; electronic edition). If we apply (*žádáme*) or submit an application (*podáváme žádost*) for asylum we refer to a process which consists of three phases: 1. we prepare the necessary documents (fill out the respective forms, prepare documents to support the application etc.), 2. we actually submit the application at the respective office, and 3. we wait for a response from the authorities.

In respect to these phases, the verb *žádat* [apply] has various meanings and can be used in various ways: either it refers to the application process as a whole (i.e. phases 1 through 3), or it refers to the process of application submission (i.e. phases 1 and 2 or 2 only), or it refers to the third phase only. When the verb *požádat/žádat* [apply-*perfective* / apply-*imperfective*] is used, various features of its meanings listed above are foregrounded.

Context A: *včera podalo 60 Číňanů žádost o azyl* [yesterday, sixty Chinese submitted an application for asylum]. It refers to phase 2 (possibly to both phases 1 and 2) of the application process/event.

Context B: this is the context relevant in the quoted news article, the sentence *aby tolik/60 Číňanů požádalo Česko o azyl, je neobvyklé* [for so many / 60 Chinese to have

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14 Aspectual meanings of imperfectivity and iterativity are independent in Czech despite the fact that they are usually expressed homonymously as the analyzed example demonstrates: *čítával knihy* [he used to read books: he read-*past-habitual-iterative-imperfective* books], *povyhazoval knihy z okna* [he threw the books out of the window one by one: he throw-*past-distributive-iterative-perfective* the books out of the windows].

15 Of course, the list of cited authors is not complete in the sense that there are other authors who would define perfective in similar way.

applied-*perfective* for asylum, is unusual] does not only state the fact that 60 Chinese are applying for asylum in the CR, but brings to reader's attention that this event presents a problem for the Ministry of Interior: to grant the asylum would implicate that the Czech Republic acknowledges that China violates human rights, which might pose a problem for the policy of the Czech Republic and/or of the Interior minister. The phrase … *tolik Číňanů požádalo Česko o azyl*… […so many Chinese to have applied for asylum…] thus relates in this context to phase 3 of the process/event of the asylum application process. In this sense, the perfective verb *požádalo* [(have) applied] refers to the process expressed by *žádá* [apply]. Therefore, the sentence *aby tolik Číňanů žádalo Česko o azyl, je neobvyklé* [that many Chinese to apply-*imperfective* for asylum, is unusual] is in this case synonymous with the above quoted example *aby tolik Číňanů požádalo Česko o azyl, je neobvyklé* [for so many Chinese to have applied-*perfective* for asylum, is unusual].

To use morphological perfective to refer to a process/event that does not imply any temporal or terminal boundary, but expresses something rather unlimited in duration (Croft, 2012, p. 34; cf. above p. 115) is not exceptional. There exists a whole class of such cases as described by Starý Kořánová (2015). Let's offer an example to illustrate this: the sentence *chlapec unese 20 kilo* [the boy carries / is able to carry 20 kilos] often does not refer to any process/event which would take place right before our eyes, but rather, to a state — the boy is able, has the capacity to lift such a weight.

The following situation may thus occur:

— The participants in communication do not care about the aspect, i.e. the perfectivity or imperfectivity of the related process/event is not part of the message,
— morphological imperfective is sometimes used in an expression which expresses perfectivity, and
— morphological perfective is sometimes used to refer to an imperfectively conceived process/event.

The next step from here is to explain how it is possible that an expression which contains a morphologically perfective or imperfective verb can be interpreted as imperfective or perfective respectively or as an expression which is not aspectually specified at all. What is it that specifies the aspect of the expression if the morphological aspect of the verb is not enough? There are two options: either there exist some other aspectual exponents in the expression under study, or there exist factors beyond the horizon of aspectual exponents identifiable in the expression itself.

Let's start with the latter option. The example analyzed above, *neklepejte, sestra vychází* [do not knock, the nurse comes out-*imperfective*] fits this case. The aspectual meaning, namely interactivity (not imperfectivity) is determined by a broader context: it is a sign on a doctor's office door, combined with the fact that there is no nurse momentarily coming out through the door.

The example *aby tolik Číňanů požádalo Česko o azyl, je neobvyklé* [for so many Chinese to have applied-*perfective* for asylum, is unusual] is similar. The contexts A and B operated as decisive factors in assigning perfective aspect to the example sentence (context A) or leaving the expression aspect unspecified, i.e. interpreting sentences

aby tolik Číňanů požádalo Česko o azyl, je neobvyklé [for so many Chinese to have applied-*perfective* for asylum, is unusual] and *aby tolik Číňanů žádalo Česko o azyl, je neobvyklé* [for so many Chinese to apply-*imperfective* for asylum, is unusual] as synonymous (context B).

Let's turn to the aspect exponents that can be identified in the expression under study itself. We do not intend to provide any exhaustive list of these. We only provide examples of what can function as such an exponent. There are many more than the two we are going to touch upon in this text.

Let's return to the example *tu knihu jsem četla* [I read-*imperfective-past* / I have read the book]. As shown above, it can be interpreted as perfective or imperfective (possibly as aspectually unspecified). If we convert the sentence into present or future tense (*tu knihu čtu* [I read-*present-imperfective* the book], *tu knihu budu číst* [I will read the book]), the sentence cannot be interpreted as perfective or aspectually unspecified anymore. In future or present tense, the sentence is imperfective only. Consequently, it is the tense which contributes to aspectual specification of the expression. Tense is thus an exponent of aspect, it influences aspectual interpretation of the expression under consideration, it contributes to it. At the same time, it is a means that is not part of the verb's aspectual morphological makeup.

Our claim that tense is an exponent of aspect resonates with observations by F. Trávníček (1923, p. 272, § 214) and F. Kopečný (1962, pp. 8n, § 4, p. 56, § 57), who noticed that in preterit, the imperfectivity of some verbs is repealed, i.e. the preterit contributes to the perfective interpretation of verbs. Tense as a factor of aspectual interpretation of an expression under study is suggested also by Starý Kořánová (2015), who draws attention to the fact that capacitives in preterit refer rather to actual event/process while their present forms refer rather to subject's capacity, ability to perform respective activity referred to by the verb, i.e. to a state. An illustration: *aljašský malamut Brit La Rose Loscan ... utáhnul 2570 kilogramů, sám přitom váží padesát kilo* [the Alaskan malamute Brit La Rose Loscan ... was able / managed to pull 2570 kilos, he himself weights fifty kilos] vs. *aljašský malamut Brit La Rose Loscan ... utáhne 2570 kilogramů, sám přitom váží padesát kilo* [the Alaskan malamute Brit La Rose Loscan ... manages to pull 2570 kilos, he himself weights fifty kilos]. To support the observation/argument, she also provides a survey of frequencies that confirm that combinations "preterit + event/process" and "present + state" prevail.[16]

Various adverbial expressions constitute another kind of aspect exponents. Kořánová and Bermel (2008, pp. 56n; namely tables 1–3, pp. 58n) speak about Tense-Aspectual Markers (TAM).[17] Here are a few illustrations of how they operate.

Tu knihu jsem četla [I read-*imperfective-past* / have read / was reading the book] — *právě, když* [just when] / *v době, kdy* [at the time when] / *zatímco* [while] *jsem tu*

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16 Chromý himself noticed that his informants tended to substitute biaspectual verbs in preterit by morphologically perfective verbs more often in comparison with biaspectuals in present (Chromý, 2014, pp. 94–97).

17 Kořánová and Bermels's TAM is not to be confused with TAM in the sense of *Time-Aspect-Modality (space)*, as is used for instance by Givón and others (Givón, 1984, pp. 269n, footnote 4, p. 271; Bybee — Perkins — Pagliuca, 1994, etc.).

knihu četla [I read-*imperfective-past* / was reading the book], *tu knihu jsem četla* **pomalu/stále/ještě**... [I read-*imperfective-past* / was reading the book **slowly, yet**]. The first sentence is aspectually unspecified, it can be used as perfective as well as imperfective (cf. above). But the aspect of the sentence/s following the hyphen is already specified, they are imperfective. It is caused by the bold expressions, since all of them usually collocate with imperfectives rather than with perfectives. That is, if an expression under study contains adverbials like the ones in bold, it is used rather imperfectively.

Na funkci rezignoval [he resigned from the position] — *Na funkci* **včera v poledne / najednou / okamžitě / nečekaně**... *rezignoval* [he resigned from the position **yesterday noon / suddenly / immediately / unexpectedly**...]. Again, the first sentence is aspectually unspecified even more prominently than in the previous example since *četla* [read-*past*] is morphologically imperfective, but *rezignovat* [resign] is a biaspectual. Nevertheless the sentence following the hyphen is perfective. Again, it is the expressions in bold which cause or contribute to the perfective interpretation of the expression as a whole.

Uplaval 100 metrů [he has swam-*perfective* / was able to swim 100 meters] — **dokud ještě** [**as long as ... still**] / **běžně** [**habitually**] / **pořád** [**still**] / **stále** [**still**] / **dlouho** [**for a long time**] *uplaval 100 metrů* [he swam-*perfective* 100 meters]. The first sentence is unspecified from the point of view of aspect — it can be understood as a statement of a subject's capacity/ability as well as the event of an actual 100-meter swim. The sentence following the hyphen, already aspectually specified is. While *uplavat* [swim-*perfective*] is morphologically perfective, the sentence as a whole acquired a capacitive meaning, i.e. a meaning which exhibits properties of imperfective expressions: it expresses unlimited duration (cf. above p. 145), it collocates with TAM expressions that collocate usually with imperfectives (here, the bold expressions in the sentence following the hyphen; Kořánová — Bermel, 2008).

From the previous paragraphs, it is clear that a category / (semantic) distinction which is considered obligatory in a given language (Czech) does not have to be decided by native speakers every time they use it. This is also true of (Czech) aspect. Expressions can be aspectually unspecified and there are then various factors contributing to the expression's aspect specification:

1. The morphological makeup of the verb itself,
2. other exponents of aspect which are part of the expression under study (adverbial expression, verbal tense, etc.), and
3. factors which are beyond the horizon given by the exponents identifiable in the expression under study, discussed above as (situational) context, in which the expression under study is used.

The factors just listed do not necessarily work to shape the aspectual interpretation of an expression in a parallel way, i.e. the effect of some of them may contradict each other. For instance, an expression containing a morphologically imperfect verb can be aspectually unspecified or it may, due to the use of other factors influencing aspect (2. and 3.), become perfective. An expression including a morphologically biaspectual

verb can be aspectually unspecified or acquire — due to 2. and 3. factors — perfective or imperfective aspect.

There are three partial conclusions to be made at this point: In communication, it is not so much whether the verb IS (morphologically) perfective or imperfective, but rather whether it is USED perfectively or imperfectively (cf. also Starý Kořánová, 2015). The aspectual use of the verb can even contradict its aspectual morphological makeup. It is not true that a biaspectual verb must be used perfectively or imperfectively, therefore it is not possible to accept such a statement as a viable assumption from which any study of aspect of biaspectuals could depart. Aspect is a matter of the whole expression under study, not only an issue of the morphological makeup of the verb. The aspect of the expression is thus determined by the morphological makeup of the verb, by aspectual exponents, which are identifiable in the expression under study and are not part of the morphological makeup of the verb, and finally, by factors outside of the expression itself.

SUBSTITUTION METHOD: WOW OR OOPS?

Going back to the *What is argued with* paragraph, we have to touch upon two issues, namely the assumption that a biaspectual is always used either perfectively or imperfectively, and the issue of the noetic viability of the substitution method. We have rejected the assumption as inadequate. Let's proceed to the substitution method.

We assume that absolute synonymy does not exist in language, i.e. the substituting expression must semantically differ from the substituted expression. The question, then, is in which semantic features the difference between the two consists, i.e. whether they do not differ in the semantic feature/s we would like to study, in our case in aspect. This is the general core of the shortcomings of the substitution method.

Let's illustrate this using an example. The sentences *v Beskydech žije medvěd* [the bear occurs / is found in the Beskydy Mountains] a *v Beskydech žijí medvědi* [bears occur / are found in the Beskydy Mountains] differ in nominal number of *medvěd* [bear]: the singular *medvěd* [bear] is usually considered an unmarked member of the opposition "singular–plural" (let us stick to structuralist terminology here) and as such it does not necessarily say anything about the number of bears living in the Beskydy mountain range. On the contrary, the plural *medvědi* [bears] signals that there is more than one bear there. We may ask two questions, each of them determining a context in which the sentences might be used:

(1) *Can we meet a bear in the Beskydy mountains?*
(2) *How many bears can we meet in the Beskydy mountains?*

In the first case, both sentences we started with — *v Beskydech žije medvěd* [the bear occurs / is found in the Beskydy Mountains] and *v Beskydech žijí medvědi* [bears occur / are found in the Beskydy Mountains] — are synonymous. If we ask question 2, these sentences are not synonymous anymore. We have thus two contexts, in one of

them the sentences are synonymous, in the other one they are not and the synonymy is breached exactly in the semantic feature we are focusing on, namely in the nominal number. The substitution method thus fails, sometimes it preserves the synonymy, sometimes not. Why could something like this not happen in the case of substitution, which is supposed to specify the aspect of the substituted biaspectual verb as well?

So let's return to aspect. We have demonstrated above that the aspect of an expression is not determined by the morphological makeup of the verb only. It can be signaled by other exponents identifiable in the expression, or even by factors which are beyond the horizon given by the expression itself. This explains why some substitutions do not have to preserve aspect and why a substitution does not have to provide a reliable criterion for aspect specification of the expression containing a biaspectual. To demonstrate this we use some of the examples given above.

The sign *neklepejte, sestra vychází* [do not knock, the nurse comes out-*imperfective*] posted on the door of a doctor's office can be substituted by *neklepejte, sestra vyjde* [do not knock, the nurse will come out-*perfective*] in the given context just as we substituted *medvěd* [bear] with *medvědi* [bears] above. As we have shown earlier, the meaning does not change with the substitution, and the substitution is synonymous. But it would be far-fetched to deduce from this that *vychází* [(she) comes out-*imperfective*] and *vyjde* [(she) comes out-*perfective*, i.e. (she) will come out] are of the same aspect.[18]

Uplaval 100 metrů [he swam / has swum-*perfective* 100 meters] and *běžně uplaval 100 metrů* [on regular basis, he swam / has swum-*perfective* 100 meters]: while the first sentence is unspecified from the point of view of aspect — it can refer to an actual event going on in front of our eyes as well as refer to the subject's ability/capacity to swim 100 meters — the latter sentence does not express an actual perfective event (as the morphological makeup of the verb itself would suggest), but refers to the subject's capacity only, i.e. it is used in a way which is quite close to imperfectivity, as shown earlier. Despite the fact that both sentences include the same morphologically perfective verb *uplaval* [has swum-*perfective*], they are different from the point of view of aspectual distinctions. The substitution of these sentences thus does not preserve the aspect.

Take the following three sentences:

(3) *Na funkci rezignoval* [he resigned from the position].
(4) *Na funkci včera s okamžitou platností rezignoval* [yesterday, he resigned from the position, effective immediatly].
(5) *Během toho, co/kdy na funkci rezignoval, ...* [while he was resigning from the position... / in the course of his resigning the position...].

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18 As we have showed above the example sentence can be understood in two ways, namely imperfectively, i.e. as a present tense statement or with iterative meaning. The latter use is sometimes referred to as a transposition (transposed use, secondary function of the present tense form, marked use of an unmarked, i.e. present tense, form of the verb etc., whatever terminology of the structural tradition we use; Křížová, 1966). But this does not diminish validity of the presented argument in any way.

Let's apply the substitution method and substitute them with expressions/sentences which include Czech verbs the aspect of which is expressed morphologically (*rezigno-vat* is a loan word in Czech) for instance like this:

(3a) *Z funkce odstoupil/odstupoval* [he has resigned-*perfective* the position / was re-signing-*imperfective* from the position].

(4a) *Z funkce včera s okamžitou platností odstoupil* [yesterday, he resigned the posi-tion, effective immediately].

(5a) *Během toho, co/kdy z funkce odstupoval, ...* [while he was resigning from the position... / in the course of his resigning from the position...].

(5b) *Během toho, co/kdy z funkce odstoupil, ...* [during the period when/while he had resigned-*perfective* from the position... / in the course of him having re-signed-*perfective* from the position...].

The substitution is unequivocal/unambiguous, namely perfective, probably only in case of sentence (4). The aspect here is co-signaled by the phrase *(včera) s okamžitou platností* [(yesterday) effective immediately], which is a signal of perfectivity and as such would fit the Table 1 of Kořánová and Bermel (2008, p. 58).

It is example (5) which matters at this point since a perfective (5b) as well as an imperfective (5a) substitution is possible. The imperfective substitution appears to be at hand because expression/s like *během té doby co/kdy* [during / in the / a (course of) time when] / *během toho co/kdy...* [during / in the course of...] signal/s a time interval, in which the event/process expressed by the verb takes/took place. The possibility of a perfective substitution is then substantiated by corpus data: expressions including *během (té) doby, co/kdy...* [during / in (the course of) time when...] + perfective have a relatively high frequency between 30% and 50% (depending on the way we count it).[19]

What can thus be concluded about the substitution method we argue against? It does not provide a conclusive answer as far as the perfectivity vs. imperfectivity of the biaspectual verb being substituted.

The substitution is unambiguous in cases when the aspect is co-signaled by an ex-ponent (*(včera) s okamžitou platností* [(yesterday) effective immediately]), which does not derive from the morphological makeup of the verb. But in this case, no substitu-

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19 Specifically, the construction *během doby, kdy* [during / in the (course of) time when] com-bines in 29.63% of its occurrences in the SYN corpus with perfectives. If synonymous transformations of some of the corpus examples to include the construction *během doby, kdy* are accepted, then the frequency of *během doby, kdy* + perfectives grows to 51.85%. Let's give an example of such a transformation: *na pozemcích v katastru Starče a Kracovic se na-chází zvlášť nebezpečná látka organofosfátového původu, během krátké doby po požití zvíře uhyne* [on properties in the Stařeč and Kracovice cadasters, a particularly dangerous material of organophosphate nature can be found, a short time after ingestion, an animal dies] — *na pozemcích v katastru Starče a Kracovic se nachází zvlášť nebezpečná látka organofosfátového původu, během krátké doby, kdy ji zvíře požije, uhyne* [on properties in the Stařeč and Kraco-vice cadasters, a particularly dangerous material of organophosphate nature can be found, a short time after an animal ingests it, it dies].

tion of the biaspectual verb is needed since the other exponent serves as the signal of the perfectivity. The fact that a biaspectual verb can be substituted by a perfective as well as an imperfective Czech verb can be explained in two ways.

1. A sentence with a biaspectual verb is used in a aspectually unspecified way, i.e. the respective communication participants do not care about the aspect in the given communication; the possibility of both substitutions then might signal aspectual non-specificity.

2. A sentence with a biaspectual verb could have been meant perfectively or imperfectively in the particular communication, nevertheless the substitution does not unveil this intention and the factors which control this (or might help to unveil it), are left outside of linguists' attention or realm of awareness. The substitution thus becomes uncontrollably random.

CONCLUSION

At this point we can take a stance on both points presented in the *What is argued with* paragraph at the beginning of this text.

It is not true that every verb, including biaspectual verbs, has to be used/interpreted/meant perfectively or imperfectively. To start with the assumption that each biaspectual is used perfectively or imperfectively is thus not adequate.

The substitution method outlined by Chromý (2014) is not conclusive. If the aspect of the sentence to be substituted is not specified by another aspectual exponent, the perfective or imperfective substitutions may be random. They are matter of a sheer chance. They depend on the context, into which an informant places the substituted sentence for herself/himself. The context then may be given by aspect exponents, which are not part of the usual aspectual morphology of the verb, or even by means beyond the horizon of such exponents. These factors might regulate the randomness, nevertheless they are outside of the author's focus. The frequency with which informants substitute the biaspectual verb with a Czech perfective or imperfective is thus by itself not a sufficient argument for the perfective or imperfective use of the given biaspectual.

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