PhD dissertation summary

ASPECT AND *AKTIONSART* IN KHANTY

(SURGUT DIALECT)

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1. Introduction

The motivation for investigating aspect and *Aktionsart* in Khanty was that there is no published work available that would give a systematic overview on this topic. My main objective was to give a description as complete as possible of these two related semantic categories in the Surgut dialect of Khanty. The description is organized to conform to the functional-typologic approaches prevalent in the last three decades[1] in order to facilitate comparative analysis of the results.

The description is restricted to a single dialect of Khanty owing to fact that the language is strongly divergent dialectally. Out of the three Khanty dialect groups (Northern, Southern, Eastern), Surgut Khanty belongs to the Eastern group, but Surgut Khanty itself can be further divided into five variants. Investigations on this dialect became more pronounced in the last two decades in Hungary mainly due to the extensive fieldwork of Márta Csepregi. Prior to her work, there were very few text samples available from Surgut Khanty, but Csepregi's *Surgut ostyak chrestomathy* published in 1998 provided a sound background for the present thesis, yielding a high amount of reliable primary data, and also being useful in defining the problems to be addressed with the aid of native speakers.

Naturally, the range of problems to be investigated is also determined by the underlying theoretical framework. In this respect I was in a favorable situation as there is extensive secondary literature available on the topic of the thesis, both descriptive and theoretical, as well as typologically and functionally oriented works. Actually, the difficulty lies in the problem of reconciling the different approaches covered in the literature while avoiding that the work become unfocused, and at the same it is also important not to miss the investigation of a promising area just because it is not discussed from a specific point of view. Finally I chose the combination of two approaches: on the one hand, the present work follows the framework developed by Ferenc Kiefer, which discusses aspect as category of sentence semantics,[2] and one of the key ideas of which is the compositional nature of aspect. On the other hand, I heavily relied on the functional-typological approach of Östen Dahl and Joan Bybee[3], in which the central unit of investigation is *gram,* i.e. any kind of element bearing a grammatical function (prefix, suffix, stem changes, reduplication, particle or any larger unit). Grams are primarily described with the help of the grammaticalization paths they follow as these determine their properties (source determination). One of the most convincing examples for this is actually the comparison of the two ways of expressing perfective aspect, the inflexional type and the so-called Slavic or derivational type: although the perfective expressed by tense and preverbs express the same semantic category, and the distribution of their use overlaps, they also exhibit characteristic differences due to the different sources and the different route of the grammaticalization process. The Bybee-Dahl approach can be applied to explain the similarities and differences of overlapping categories (a characteristic example of this is perfective aspect proper and the so-called resultative or completive *aktionsart,* which is also related to the concept of telicity); helps

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[1] See for example: Comrie 1976, Dahl 1985, Bybee–Dahl 1989, Bybee et al. 1994, Dahl 2000.

[2] A recent summary of his findings is Kiefer (2006).

[3] See footnote 1.

to understand better the prototypical and non-prototypical uses of grams (as opposed to approaches that rely on describing binary oppositions), and the dialectally, idiolectally or in some other way governed variation in the use of grams, which seems to surface inevitably when one investigates corpus data, or works with linguistic data acquired from different speakers. On the other hand, Kiefer's approach provides formal means to assess the validity of the categories created, and its wider scope (aspect can also be interpreted as a property of the sentence, not just the verb) allows one to tackle phenomena that cannot be described by focusing on verbal morphology only.

2. Methods

In the first round of data acquisition I used published texts[4] and focused on the role of verb endings, preverbs, and their co-occurrence with other elements relevant to aspect (primarily the perfectivizing particle and some temporal adverbials). In the second round – owing to the financial support of the Hungarian Scientific Research Fund K68061 – I had the opportunity to meet Khanty native speakers several times between 01 July 2007 and 31 December 2011. One of them speaks the Tromagan version of the Surgut dialect, and there were two periods (May 2008 and January 2011) [5] to conduct research with her help in Budapest. The other informant speaks the Yugan variant of the dialect, and she spent a month three times in Budapest (in January 2009, October 2010 and November 2011). The majority of the data used in the present dissertation was obtained during these periods. While administering the questionnaires with the informants, I could always rely on the help of my supervisor, Márta Csepregi. We made sound recordings during each session, the total time of which is approximately 38 hours.

During the sessions with the informants I elicited data mainly with the help of different questionnaires. These included self-made ones in Khanty language in which I asked the informant to judge the grammaticality of examples (e.g. if the preverb is optional or compulsory in a given context, or if a given monomorphemic or derived verbal form is compatible with a certain type of temporal adverbial). I also prepared a few questionnaires that contained tables to be filled in with the help of the informant; these were used to investigate the productivity and other features of preverbs and deverbal suffixes. To assess the aspectual categories at the sentence level, I also assigned translation tasks. An important source for these were the three questionnaires published in *Tense and Aspect in the languages of Europe* (ed.: Östen Dahl, Berlin, Mouton de Gruyter, 2000) about the categories of Perfect, Progressive, and Future. I have made minor modifications in these tests and translated them into Russian.[6] I also compiled two additional Russian questionnaires using a textbook designed for Hungarian native speakers (Szacski–Estók 1989) aimed at teaching and drilling the aspectual distinctions of Russian. Moreover, I have used a series of pictures suitable for eliciting certain aspectual oppositions. Finally, there was also an opportunity to make high-quality

recordings of tales read out aloud and a bit of spontaneous speech at the Department of Phonetics at Eötvös Loránd University.[7] These recordings are suitable to investigate the phonetic features of preverbs[8].

3. Structure of the dissertation

In the introductory chapter I provide a broad overview of the terms used thereafter, such as grammatical time, aspect, verbal situation type and *Aktionsart*. The second chapter contains a review of the literature,[9] focusing on the works of authors I relied on in my investigations: the theory of Carlota S. Smith claiming that sentences contain information about two components of aspect, i.e. situation type and viewpoint (Smith 1991); the structural semantics approach of Ferenc Kiefer (mainly based on Kiefer 2006), the statements on cognitive semantics of Ronald W. Langacker (Langacker 2008), and the functional-typological works mentioned above (among others, Bybee et al 1994, Dahl 1985). I have also provided a short description on the general approach of formal semantics in which I introduce the concept of compositionality.

In the third chapter I describe the dialect investigated, and introduce the native speaker informants as well as the methods used for data collection. The rest of the dissertation contains the results based on original research. In the fourth chapter I follow the Bybee–Dahl approach and discuss grams associated with verbs expressing notions associated with aspect and Aktionsarten. More specifically, I focus on derivative suffixes and preverbs with special emphasis on productivity and optionality, as well as giving an overview on the Aktionsart-categories expressed by these grams. The central topic of the fifth chapter is sentence aspect: based primarily on the approach treating aspect as a category of sentence semantics, adapted for Hungarian by Ferenc Kiefer, I analyze those constituents of a sentence that might contribute to its aspectual interpretation. For practical reasons, however, this chapter does not cover all syntactic components capable of determining or modifying sentence aspect. Instead, in this part of the dissertation I focus on three possible components: temporal adverbials, the *tĭ* particle, sometimes termed as a perfectivizing element in secondary literature on Khanty, and the role of the object. In the sixth chapter – summarizing the previous ones – I investigate the problems related to the markedness of specific aspectual categories. Finally, in the seventh chapter I attempt to put the results into a wider context referring to typological, diachronic and areal considerations. This is followed by the list of references and the appendix containing all the questionnaires used for data collection.

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[7] I would like to thank Alexandra Markó for her help in making the recordings.
[8] This part of the investigations is still in progress
[9] Admittedly in a selective manner as not feasible otherwise

4. Results

Below I list the main findings of the thesis, following the structure of the dissertation.

4.1. Morphological markers of aspect 1: derivative suffixes

4.1.1. One of the main goals of the questionnaires was to find those derivative suffixes[10] that may express aspectual distinctions and are productive (however, I follow Ladányi [2007] in viewing productivity as a scalar, and not as a binary feature). I describe these suffixes in two groups conforming to the traditional frequentative – momentaneous distinction. Out of the first group, three suffixes proved to be productive, *-iʌ-, -ɣəʌ-* and *-ɣi-*. The function of the first two largely overlaps, both of them yield frequentative verbs. The distribution of the two suffixes is apparently governed by a morphotactic rule: *-iʌ-* applies to monomorphemic stems, while *-ɣəʌ-* to polymorphemic stems, i.e. roots already bearing another derivative suffix. However, the distribution of the two affixes is not strictly complementary, as there is a transitional class of verbs the suffixation of which does not seem to be predictable. Verbs in this group are those in the case of which it is not evident whether they are segmentable for the speaker (derivatives that are already opaque for the speakers, and verbs of foreign origin which contain a derivative in the source language).

4.1.2. It should be noted that – as opposed to Hungarian (Kiefer 2006: 154) – the two frequentative suffixes can combine with stative verbs. However, whereas verbs belonging to the other situation types get a „standard" frequentative interpretation when combined with these suffixes ('the situation described by the root happens sometimes / many times / frequently'; in the case of verbs expressing movement, the root and the derivative may differ in the meaning 'movement in one direction : movement in several directions'), stative verbs bearing these suffixes express that the given state takes place in bounded episodes several times (e.g. *ǩåńť-* 'to be sick (in general)' : *ǩåńťiʌ-* 'to be sick once in a while'; *tăj-* 'to own' : *tăjiʌ-* 'sometimes the experient owns something, sometimes he/she does not own anything'). This kind of interpretation is reminiscent of Langacker's (2008) observation on the interpretation of English stative verbs in the Present Progressive. Langacker claims that when a speaker chooses to use this combination (which can be considered untypical, as statives usually appear in Present Simple), he/she conceptualizes the given situation as dynamic, yielding a special interpretation: it appears not as a durative, homogenous situation, but shares the features of dynamic situations in having boundaries, and are assumed to reach that boundary, which in this special case may also imply that the given state is only temporary.

4.1.3. The third suffix that belongs to the frequentative group and appeared to be productive has a distinct function, its meaning is less general than that of the previous two. This seems to be a second *Aktionsart*-category expressed with a deverbal suffix, and on the basis of the test with Russian loanverbs, its most characteristic meaning is 'trying to do something'. This meaning is obviously tied to imperfective aspect and atelicity, as it

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[10] Out of a truly extensive stock of verbal derivative suffixes: Ganschow (1965) enlists 112 suffixes that yield verbal derivatives out of bases belonging to different word classes.

expresses that the situation is in progress, and (at least in that phase that is asserted) it does not reach its potential culmination point, i.e. it expresses the opposite of resultative.[11]

4.1.4. Out of the numerous momentaneous suffixes that appeared in the texts, finally the tests showed that only one, the suffix *-mt-* can be considered fully productive. The interpretation of verbs bearing this suffix seems to depend on the situation type of the base verb: those derived from a dynamic base express that the given situation reaches its endpoint quickly (i.e. the derivative is telic and perfective), whereas verbs derived from stative bases get an inchoative interpretation, i.e. these express that the given state comes about. The group of activities seems to behave ambiguously in this respect, as both kinds of interpretations appear with verbs belonging to this group. For instance, the informant rendered the meaning of the Russian loanverb *guljajʌə-* 'to walk' combined with the suffix *-mt-* as 'start to walk',[12] whereas the verb *jińt'əmtə-,* the suffixed form of the base verb meaning 'to drink' was translated as 'to drink up quickly', and the derivative *jåntəmt(ə)-* derived from the verb meaning 'to sew' was translated both as 'start to sew' and 'to finish the sewing of something quickly'.[13]

4.1.5. Summing up, the derivative suffixes that appeared to be productive express the following Aktionsart-categories: frequentative *(-iʌ-, -ɣəʌ-);* 'to try' *(-ɣi-),* subitive ('to complete/finish something quickly, *-mt-),* inchoative *(-mt-).* It is important to note here that one verbal base can be suffixed with the marker of two[14] different Aktionsart-categories, and – contrarily to Hungarian (Kiefer 2006: 164) – it is not a requirement that the two categories be expressed with different types of derivative forms (i.e. one of them with the help of a suffix, and the other with a preverb, as it is the case in Hungarian).

4.1.6. During the analysis of published texts I came accross a number of frequentative suffixes that seemed to derive transparent, rule governed forms, even though their productivity was questionable. Therefore, it seemed to be worth an analysis whether these derivative suffixes are used to derive new verbal forms, and how the verbs containing this suffix relate to verbal forms derived from the same stem with a different frequentative suffix. In this part of the investigation I included three further suffixes, namely *-ənt/ant-, -əksə-* and *-sʌ-,* and I tried to compare their distribution with that of the fully productive

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[11] A similar kind of meaning is also present in the interpretation of the Hungarian verbs suffixed with the frequentative *-gAt-,* but it appears randomly (e.g. *feszeget* 'tries to strain', *ébresztget* 'tries to wake up somebody', *fojtogat* 'tries to strangle someone').

[12] Or at least I suppose she meant to give this meaning, as she translated this verb form with the Russian verb *загулять*. It is a characteristic function of the Russian prefix *za-* to derive verbs of ingressive *Aktionsart* from intransitive activity-verbs (Isačenko 1962: 388-390), but the a *za*-prefixed form of the verb *гулять* 'to walk' seems to have a special, non-transparent meaning 'to guzzle' instead of the meaning 'to start to walk', at least this latter meaning is missing from the dictionaries, and it was also unknown for the native speaker I consulted. Yet I consider it highly improbable that the Russian loanverb that combines with a fully productive momentaneous suffix in Khanty would get the same lexicalised meaning as the Russian form; it is more likely that the given Russian form was interpreted as a transparent prefixed verb by the Khanty informant having an ingressive meaning.

[13] It could be possible that the ingressive interpretation arising with certain activity verbs is a case of pattern borrowal from Russian, but I find this questionable, as ingressive forms cannot be formed from states in Russian, this Aktionsart-category marks the starting point of intransitive activities (Isačenko ibid.).

[14] Or theoretically even more, but those verbal forms that contained more than two derivative suffixes were already rejected by the informant, as she considered them too complicated to interpret.

frequentative suffixes, i.e. *-iʌ-* and *-ɣəʌ-*. It is a common feature of the previously mentioned three suffixes that they partly express frequentativity and partly intransitivity. This part of the research led to the observation that – contrarily to *-iʌ-* and *-ɣəʌ-* – these are more than likely non-productive grams. Their function is on its way to become oblique (this is the case with the suffix *-sʌ-* in general, and in some derived verbs formed with the other two suffixes as well), or is somewhere in the notional domain of intransitivity and frequentativity, but the exact meaning of the derivatives formed with these suffixes does not seem to be predictable. The results of the test that contained Russian loanverbs showed that the suffix *-ant-* combines productively with newly borrowed verbs, but in this case it unambiguously derived intransitive verbs.

4.1.7. Similarly to the group of frequentative suffixes, there were some suffixes in the momentaneous group as well that turned out to be improductive during the tests performed with the help of native speakers. The most striking example seemed to be the suffix *-ip-*. During the first phase of tests the informant speaking the Yugan dialect was able to explain the difference between the base verbs and their *-ip*-suffixed forms I listed on the basis of studying published texts, and she was also able to attach this suffix to other base verbs, seemingly without any constraint. However, she mentioned during this session already that she thought this form was substituted by other suffixes expressing that the given situation reaches its culmination point quickly. Then during the tests with Russian loanverbs, this informant did accept all the derived forms with the suffix *-ip-,* but she interpreted them differently, as deverbal nouns. The other native speaker informant (speaking the Tromagan version) merely asked whether these forms were ment to be written in Khanty. All in all, the observation of the first informant seems to be accurate, that is, this momentaneous suffix is on its way to become oblique.

4.1.8. However, it seems that the group of momentaneous suffixes may acquire new members as well, i.e. there might be new suffixes emerging, not only old ones disappearing. These new suffixes come about through the unification of several older suffixes, the combination of which are reinterpreted as a single new suffixal form. The speaker of the Yugan dialect called our attention to two such new forms, *-məmtə-* and *-maɣt-* during the sessions. She also mentioned that these forms are to be found only in the spoken language, and the test that was dedicated to examine productivity with the help of loanverbs did not show that these forms would attach freely to any verbs. However, the informant spontaneously listed verbs bearing these suffixes; perhaps the formation of these new derived verbs is not (yet) rule-governed, but is based on analogy.

4.2. Morphological markers of aspect 2: preverbs

4.2.1. In this chapter I started with an overview of the questions concerning the possible definitive criteria of preverbs. Partly on the basis of secondary literature, and partly on the basis of my own investigations I describe here the morphological, phonological and syntactic features of the class of preverbs. This is followed by a detailed semantic analyisis of this category. I based the investigation on the hypothesis that preverbs originally expressing spatial concepts (usually with lative direction, i.e. moving towards something) acquire a new meaning, namely telicity marking during the process of grammaticalization, i.e. in their new function they expresses that the situation reached its

inherent endpoint, and came to an end due to this. When examining the potential combinations of preverbs and verbs, the verbs were put into different subgroups mainly according to the Vendlerian situation types, with the inclusion of some further groups, though. Smith (1991) describes the different situation types with the help of three features, namely [+/- static], [+/- durative] and [+/- telic]. Out of the five situation types listed by Smith, the group of activities and accomplishments differ only in the feature telic: both of these groups are [- static] and [+ durative], but activities are [- telic], whereas accomplishments are [+ telic]. Therefore I assumed that the preverbs that acquire the function of telicity marking would appear most robustly among the accomplishment verbs, distinguishing activity : accomplishment verbs expressed potentially with the same base verb. It seemed to be also worthy of investigation whether telicity markers combine with achievement verbs, which are invariably [- telic], and similarly, whether telicity marking preverbs appear with semelfactives and states, which are, on the other hand, invariably atelic. During the sessions we investigated the potential combinations of 123 different verbs with 8 selected preverbs (whether a given preverb combines with a given verb, and if it does, what is the meaning of the derived form).

4.2.2. Verbs expressing movement or change of position were investigated separately. It did not come as a surprise that these verbs combine relatively freely with preverbs, which express the direction of movement in this case. The number of non-occurring combinations was minimal in this group, and the reason for a non-existent form was usually that the movement verb itself had some kind of directionality in its meaning which was incompatible with the directional meaning of a given preverb. As for the rest of the verbal groups, the combinational possibilities of verbs and preverbs were much more restricted. Whenever a verb seemed to be exceptional, that is, it turned out to be freely combinable with most or all of the preverbs, the verb itself could be interpreted as compatible with the directional meaning of the preverbs. However, when the preverb in a certain preverb-verb combination was interpreted as a telicity marker (or an *Aktionsart*-marker, see below), the combinational possibilities were usually restricted to one, two or three preverbs for a verb. This was characteristic of the activity : accomplishment pairs, but also of achievement verbs.

As achievement verbs do not have atelic pairs, one had to face the question what the function is of these telicity-marking preverbs. Naturally, there is the possibility that the initial assumption was wrong, and telicity-marking preverbs spread randomly among the verbs belonging to different kinds of situation types. This cannot be excluded, but the other two situation types confirmed to the initial assumption. Namely, stative verbs hardly combined with preverbs, not even with direction marking preverbs (which – theoretically – could combine with perception verbs, marking the direction of perception). As for momentaneous / semelfactive verbs, telicity marking preverbs scarcely appeared in this group, in the attested preverb-verb combinations the preverb expresses directionality. Returning to the question of achievements and telicity markers, another possible explanation would be to claim that the grammaticalization of the preverbs is at an advanced stage, and it is observed that during the last phases of grammaticalization a gram may become obligatory, i.e. its use is extended to contexts were it would be redundant. However, this is not confirmed by the findings of other types of questionnaires, namely the tests in which I asked grammaticality judgements and those

based on translation. In the latter type of tests it happened many times that preverbs were not used in contexts which were meant to elicit telic / perfective forms, even in case of verbs that theoretically, e.g. on the basis of the other two kinds of tests had telic forms marked with a preverb. Perhaps this discrepancy is at least partly explicable by calling attention to role potentially played by the different elicitation methods: when a table has to filled in and discussed, an informant may accept forms that are interpretable for him/her, even though the given form would not be actually used by her in spontaneous speech.

4.2.3. Investigating the possible preverb-verb combinations with special attention to the behaviour of the preverbs, the distribution of the eight selected preverbs seemed to outline three different groups. There are preverbs the function of which is almost exclusively direction marking, and verbs combined with these preverbs get a telic interpretation only through this directional meaning. The preverb *kem* 'ki' is a characteristic representative of this group, but the preverbs *nik* 'down' and *arɣə* 'apart' behaves similarly as well. The members of the next group are *iʌə* 'away', *jʌə* 'down', *nŏk̯* 'up' és *tŏwə* 'there.' These may mark the telicity of a large number of verbs, but they all preserved their original spatial (in the case of *tŏwə´*, spatial-deictic) meaning as well. The most frequently appearing telicity / perfectivity marking preverb seems to be *nŏk̯*: both the test described above and the session focusing on combination with Russian loanverbs showed this result. The third group consists of a single member, *t'ĭk̯* 'to the utmost extent'. This element differs from the members of the previous group with respect to its source of grammaticalization, as it never marked directionality, but it is explained as a loan adjective from Selkup meaning 'solid, dense, thick.' Due to this, it is not surprising that its grammatical function is different from the rest of the preverbs as well (another example of source determination in grammaticalization), as it is an Aktionsart-marker that expresses that a given situation terminates / reaches its endpoint in a highly intensive way (which also means that this Aktionsart-category is tied to perfective aspect). The native speaker informant accepted and interpreted all Russian loanverbs with this preverb, so the productivity of this gram is obvious. Therefore, if *t'ĭk̯* can be considered a genuine preverb despite of its different origin, then there is a single Aktionsart, namely intensive, which is expressed with the help of a preverb in Khanty.

4.2.4. It is a pivotal phase of the grammaticalization process of preverbs when their directional meaning fades and telicity marking becomes prominent. However, the grammaticalization path does not necessarily end here. One possibility is the emergence of further shades of meaning, giving rise to different Aktionsart-categories expressed by preverbs. This might have happened with the preverb *tŏwə* 'there', the distribution of which is partly similar to the second group of preverbs, but partly overlaps with *t'ĭk̯*. As for the possible intensive Aktionsart-meaning of this originally deictic element, its source might be the metaphoric use of some *tŏwə* + verb combinations in which *tŏwə* 'there' refers to the sacred sphere of the world. However, the emergence of the different Aktionsart-categories in general would be an extremely interesting problem to investigate from the point of view of historical linguistics, as each and every element that acquired an Aktionsart-meaning above its original telicizing / perfectivizing function would require an explanation concerning the source of this new meaning.

5. Sentence aspect as a compositional phenomenon

The main issue of this chapter is to investigate the possible combinations of mono- or polymorphemic verbs and the other constituents that might have relevance in the aspectual interpretation of the sentence, following Kiefer's approach in treating sentence as a relevant unit of aspectual interpretation. The chapter is based on the tests that tried to assess the role of temporal adverbials, the particle *ťi* that is generally considered to be a prefectivizing particle, and the role of the object. Focussing on these three elements was motivated entirely by practical reasons. As for the particle in question, it is usually described as a marker of perfectivity, therefore it seemed inevitable to include it into this discussion. Concerning the temporal adverbials, these play an important role in testing, or even determining the aspect of different structures. As for the role of the object, on the basis of the secondary literature it was highly probable that its different types might affect the aspectual interpretation of sentences.

5.1. When investigating temporal adverbials, I tried to focus on those that generally play a role in testing the aspectual distinctions. During the first phases of this examination, it seemed that postpositional phrases containing the very same postposition, *mǎrə* 'at the time of' may occur both in bounded and in unbounded structures, that is, both in perfective and imperfective sentences. However, further tests compiled to check this fairly problematic outcome showed that there is a form of this postposition that bears a further suffix, namely *mǎrat,* and this is the form that is compatible with bounded interpretation, as opposed to the basic form *mǎrə* surfacing in unbounded situations. Fortunately, there were adverbials the aspectual features of which were a lot easier to describe, for instance, the form *əj nurγə* 'all the time' is an adverbial that can only appear in imperfective sentences. There are two elements, those meaning *already* and *yet,* the interpretation of which may differ radically in imperfective and perfective contexts. However, when I tried to test elements with these meanings in Khanty, it turned out that there seems to be no such lexical element in Khanty that means 'already'. Concerning the relationship of derived verbs and adverbials, it is interesting to note that the adverbial meaning 'all of a sudden' was several times simply left out by the informants when translating sentences. They explained that omission with the use of verbal forms suffixed with *-mt-,* which makes the use of this adverbial redundant, as the suffix itself expresses the same meaning.

5.2. Concerning the compositionality of sentence aspect, it was even more interesting to investigate those cases when an adverbial and a certain (mono- or polymorphemic verb form) clash. There are basically two options in this case: the speaker either judges these sentences semantically uniterpretable (or at least odd), or the sentence gets a shifted interpretation. I tried to test two such cases, namely stative verbs and adverbials that presuppose dynamic contexts (e.g. 'all of a sudden'), and momentaneous verbs with durative temporal adverbials. In the previous case, the results were similar to those described by Smith (1991: 49) concerning English: stative verbs may get a shifted, inchoative interpretation when co-occurring with temporal adverbials that presuppose dynamic contexts. In the latter case, i.e. momentaneous verbs and durative adverbials, the acceptability of the combinations seemed to depend on the morphological structure of the

verbs. Namely, a verb with a productive momentaneous affix (in practice, this could be only one suffix, *-mt-)* was incompatible with a durative adverbial, the informant corrected the structure in this case through attaching a frequentative affix to the verb bearing the given momentaneous affix. When the verb seemed to be opaque, or at least the suffix on the verb was a less productive one, the sentences with durative adverbials weren't judged ungrammatical, but they acquired a shifted interpretation, i.e. they were reinterpreted iteratively.

5.3. Concerning the particle *t̄i,* both Csepregi (1998: 37) and Nikolaeva (1999: 38) mentions that it can play an aspectual role, namely it can express perfectivity. However, testing this particle showed that the informants found those imperfective sentences that contained this gram perfectly grammatical, moreover, the given sentences were interpreted imperfectively. Consequently, I argued that the perfective interpretation of this particle might not be present in its lexical meaning, but only arises as a conversational implicature, and explained this on the basis of the transitivity hypothesis discussed extensively in Hopper–Thompson (1980).

5.4. The most problematic part of the investigation of sentence aspect was determining the role of the object. I had planned to examine quantified objects and definite vs. indefinite objects in perfective and imperfective contexts, but there were several factors that basically put this off. On the one hand, the informant speaking the Yugan dialect with the help of whom the majority of these issues were tested claimed that the use of the objective conjugation is changing in her dialect, and – perhaps owing to this – she was sometimes uncertain concerning the grammaticality of certain structures. It was also a practical problem that some of the sentences I put together for testing proved to be inadequate for this reason, and they were simply misinterpreted. It was a more general obsticle that many details of the syntax of this dialect (or perhaps Khanty in general) are simply not investigated, or the results of the investigations are controversial, and the study of this particular problem, the role of the object in the aspectual interpretation of the sentence, simply lacks a firm descriptive linguistic foundation.

However, it seems that the results concerning the role of quantified object by and large are the same that Kiefer stated concerning Hungarian: in many cases there is no difference in the interpretation of sentences containing and not containing a telicizing preverb, as the quantified object itself delimits a situation, giving rise to perfective interpretation. There were also phenomena that seemed to suggest that definiteness and aspectual interpretation interact, but those few sentences from the tests the interpretation of which was obvious in this respect are insufficient to draw firmly established conclusions. All in all, this problem should be investigated further, but it would also have the prerequisite to obtain a more general syntactic description of the dialect.

6. Questions concerning markedness

6.1. It seems evident that imperfective aspect is the unmarked member of the imperfective : perfective opposition. Those sentences which are unmarked for perfective aspect can still acquire perfective interpretation in context, whereas sentences marked for perfectivity cannot be reinterpreted imperfectively solely on the basis of contextual clues. Expressing imperfective aspect does not require the use of any markers, so situations that

happen around/at the time of speech and habitual situations can both be expressed without any markers. However, habitual reading can also emerge when verb forms suffixed with the frequentative gram *-γəʌ-* appeared in suitable context. As for the grams that belong to the imperfective aspectual domain, these usually express *Aktionsart*-categories (frequentative and trying). Besides, it is characteristic of Khanty that polymorphemic verb forms that already contain a derivational marker of perfectivity can be re-imperfectivized with the help of different morphological processes. A further characteristic subtype of imperfectivity, namely progressivity (when it is emphasised that a given situation is in progress at a specific reference time) does not have a special marker in Khanty, this meaning is usually rendered with the use of some lexical element (most often with the adverbials *it* 'now', *it mata* 'right now').

6.2. Concerning perfectivity, it seems that perfective reading can emerge without any morphological markers, based solely on context, meaning that the same string of morphemes can be interpreted both imperfectively and perfectively. However, this does not mean that there would not be any means to express that a given situation is bounded, perhaps by reaching its potential culmination point. Besides the derivative suffixes and preverbs discussed above, perfectivity can be marked with the help of adverbials *(əjnam* 'all, completely', *pətaʌ mŏčə* 'until its end') and super-lexical morphemes (see Smith 1991: 48), in this case the verb *tərəm-* 'it ends, it is ready'.

6.3. Besides expressing the end of a situation, super-lexical morphemes can also express their beginning. Using such morphemes have an inevitable effect on the aspectual interpretation of the sentence, as (according to Smith ibid.), when using these verbs, the speaker does not present a situation as a whole, but focusses on some part of it: on its middle phase or on one of its endpoints. However, the beginning and the end of a situation is in fact a situation in itself, and necessarily a telic one, as it always brings about a change of state. The completion of a situation can be expressed with the verb *tərəm-* mentioned above, and there are quite a few synonymous verbs that may express the beginning of a situation *(jə-* 'become something, start, want'; *čŭksəm-* 'begin', *răŋip-* 'begin', *pit-* 'fall, get'). These super-lexical morphemes can have a role in expressing future tense as well.

6.4. Concerning future tense, I tried to investigate the role of telicity marking elements in expressing future, as it is widely attested in languages that tense and aspect are intertwined categories, and a characteristic pattern of this is that perfective verb forms in the present tense may be interpreted as expressing future. The results showed that Khanty is similar to Hungarian (and quite a few Finno-Ugric and Germanic languages spoken in Northern Europe) in having the option of not marking future. Still, as in other languages having preverbs or prefixes, sentences containing preverb + verb combinations may be interpreted as referring to the future, and it seems that the suffix *-mt-* that also yields verbs of perfective aspect can have a similar role. As for verbs marked with this suffix, the present tense forms may express the meaning that the speaker wishes to complete the given situation in the near future. It was interesting to note that not only telicity markers may have a role in expressing future time reference, but also grams from the notional domain of imperfectivity, namely frequentative suffixes. However, their effect on the

interpretation of the sentence is different: there were sentences in the translational tasks where the informant used verbs bearing frequentative suffixes because she felt that in this way the sentence does not mean that the given situation will definitely occur, but only marks the possibility of occurrence.

7. Beyond description: typological, historical and areal observations

7.1. Concerning the typological classification of aspectual systems, it seems that Khanty can be perfectly adequately placed in the system developed by Dahl (1985), Bybee–Dahl (1989) and Bybee et al. (1994). According to these descriptions, there are two different ways of expressing (verbal) aspect, inflectional and derivational systems. These two types differ in many respects, for instance in the core meaning of the aspectual categories that is due to the different sources of grammaticalization of the given markers. While inflexional aspectual markers usually arise from another inflectional category (characteristically of *perfect),* derivational systems in which original directional markers develop aspectual meanings (in the terminology of these authors, *bounders)* bear the impact of their original meaning in the aspectual uses as well. That means that they mark reaching a certain endpoint in their aspectual function too, hence the characteristic telic (in the terminology applied by Bybee et al., completive) interpretation. Besides, in languages that apply bounders in marking perfectivity, this derivational process bears the hallmarks of derivational processes in general: there are many lexical idiosyncrasies, i.e. there are verbs that do not have a prefixed pair, the distribution of the different prefixes (or preverbs) might be non-predictable, and the prefixed verbs may have additional meanings besides expressing perfectivity. This can be explained by pointing out that the process of grammaticalization is different in the case of preverbs: new forms spread through lexical diffusion, whereas the grammaticalization and the distribution of inflectional affixes is governed by more general grammatical principles. In languages with bounders, there are less restrictions in the combination of bounders with tenses. [15] In the chapters describing preverbs I heavily relied on the approach of the above mentioned authors, as it proved to be an adequate framework for the analysis and explanation of the data acquired from texts and native speaker informants. All in all, Khanty can be classified in this typological approach as a language expressing aspect with the help of derivational means.

7.2. Some authors mention a potential historical relationship between the above introduced inflectional and derivational systems, mainly that the appearance of preverbs / prefixes may result in the simplification of the system of temporal inflections (see Kiefer 1997, Lindstedt 2000, É. Kiss 2005). In the dissertation I give an overview of a few languages in which aspectual preverbs appeared, and argue that this hypothesized correlation is far from being obvious. In fact, the appearance of derivational aspect markers (i.e. preverbs/prefixes) in a language may have at least three different types of inpact on the tense system of the given language: a) the inflectional system does indeed

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[15] Whereas in languages where aspectual categories are expressed inflectionally the use of perfective aspect might be restricted to the past.

go through simplification, b) the derivational expression of aspect integrates into the aspecto-temporal system of the language, and the number of the tenses does not change (in fact, the number of tenses may even grow); c) the inflectional system goes through simplification, but there is no correlation with the development of derivative means of coding aspect. I also try to give a reason for the problems with the explanation that relies on redundancy, i.e. that the development of derivational means 'drives out' the complex tense systems, as these express the same notions, and doubly marking certain distinctions would be redundant. In fact, the differences between inflectional and derivational categories listed above show that explanations based on redundancy are at least problematic. Finally, I also point out that when one tries to explore the potential causes and outcomes of the emergence of preverbs, it would be necessary to consider changes other than those pertaining to the tense system, namely those that might affect the synonymous derivational means that also express aspectual distinctions.

7.3. Concerning this issue, I analysed the purported form-function correspondences between aspectual markers, namely those that in languages that apply both preverbs and derivational suffixes, aspect is expressed with the preverbs, and that in these languages the Aktionsarten associated with the perfective aspect are expressed with the help of preverbs, whereas those associated with the imperfective aspect are expressed with the help of suffixes (Kiefer 2006: 197). Both Khanty and Hungarian are languages that fit the first criterion, i.e. they have preverbs and derivative suffixes. However, these statements are only true of Hungarian, Khanty does not fit into this generalization. In the dissertation I claimed that it is not this single counterexample that would made these generalizations invalid, but they can be refuted on theoretical grounds, by relying on the observations of grammaticalization studies. As for the preverbs, it is true that they are probably associated with perfective aspect, owing to the characteristic grammaticalization path they follow.[16] However, derivational suffixes do not seem to be tied inherently to any of the aspectual domains. I am not aware of the discussion of any special grammaticalization path that would explain the emergence of deverbal derivative suffixes in general, or those out of these that play a role in the aspecto-temporal domain in particular. Therefore, the hypothesis that derivative suffixes would be associated with the imperfective domain seems to be unfounded.

Then again, as I mentioned at the end of the previous section, this does not mean at all that it would be unnecessary to examine the possible (synchronic or diachronic) interplay of preverbs and suffixes. It is possible that Hungarian displays the above mentioned distribution of preverbs and suffixes (the former expressing notions associated with perfective, the latter with imperfective aspect) because the majority of the momentaneous derivative suffixes became improductive by Early Old Hungarian, whereas the grammaticalization of the preverbs started at the end of Proto-Hungarian, and was still in progress in Old Hungarian (D. Mátai 1991: 433). D. Bartha describes the potential causal relationship as follows: „Momentaneous suffixes in the present language use became superfluous partly because of the development of the system of the

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[16] Although it is interesting to note here that Smith (1991) describes similar particles as means of marking imperfectivity, as in the example *read : read in.*

Hungarian preverbs, many items of which were perfectly adequate to fill in the role of momentaneous suffixes. (Old Hungarian *csuszamik,* Present-day Hungarian *megcsúszik,* 'to slip'; OH *állapik,* PdH *megáll* 'to stop')." In Khanty – as opposed to Hungarian – it seems that verbal derivative suffixes have a more pronounced role in expressing aspectual and *Aktionsart*-distinctions, and these do not seem to be driven out from this functional domain by the preverbs, although there were neologisms that were derived with both methods *(ʌǻjɣəmt-* and *nŏk̨ ʌǻjəɣ-* , both meaning that the computer freezes). All in all, I think that besides paying attention to the possible correlation between the development and change in the inflexional and derivational systems, it would be also important to analyse the possible changes in the system of verbal derivational suffixes.

7.3. Finally, I tried to investigate the potential contact-induced changes on the Khanty aspect system. I argued that interference-phenomena do not seem to influence greatly the use of morphological means expressing perfective aspect, in fact Russian influence surfaces only through some calques coined on the basis of Russian prefixed verbs. However, in the domain of imperfectivity there were traces of pattern borrowal from Russian, which lead to the emergence of new functions in the case of certain frequentative suffixes. On the one hand, there were sentences in the translational tasks in which the contrast of the Russian perfective : imperfective forms expressed the difference that the result of the given situation holds, or, in the case of imperfective form, does not hold. This contrast was translated into Khanty by using the base verb and its *-iʌ-* suffixed frequentative form, respectively. As this kind of meaning difference does not appear to be coded in this way in the texts surveyed, the influence of Russian in the appearance of this pattern seems to be fairly likely. Besides, both the frequentative *-iʌ-* and the suffix *-ɣi̯-* expressing trying (and not reaching the culmination point) has appeared in a more general role,[17] in which they simpli express that the situation (or the activity phase of a situation, if applicable) is in progress at the time of speech, meaning that the possibility to express phasal aspect (Kiefer 1996) with morphological means has appeared in Khanty as well.

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[17] Besides, in this case the novel use of the suffixes did not only appear in translational texts, but there were examples of it also in the sentences that were elicited with the help of pictures and those elicited with the help of questionnaires written in Khanty.

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