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Aspect marking and situation types in Greek, Polish and Swedish

Ann Lindvall

Introduction
This article is a continuation of my article in Working Papers 45, 1996, which was an analysis of definite marking and referential status of nouns. This article is a parallel and deals with verbs, namely aspect marking and situation types, and has the same approach, cognitive and typological, and the same corpus: an extract from a Swedish children’s book. After a presentation of the theoretical background, this article presents an analysis of the three languages Greek (modern), Swedish and Polish. The article will go from morphological aspect marking into the question of discourse motivation of aspect. The results are discussed and formed into a schema with typological patterns. The Greek letters are transliterated to their phonemic counterparts in Latin script, except γ δ τ χ ς, which are written in accordance with the principles of IPA.

Previous theoretical treatments
Aspect is a label covering various linguistic phenomena and is thus not a uniform concept. Closely connected to the question of morphological/grammatical aspect is the one of lexical aspect/semantic aspect/Aktionsart, where it is neither possible nor necessary to make a clear-cut boundary. The point of departure of this article is the idea of aspect as a cross-linguistic phenomenon, with extraordinarily overt and systematic morphological expression in some languages, here Greek and Polish.

When discussing aspect and situation types, it is necessary to regard categorisation of events as such. The major relatively uncontroversial division is between ‘states’ and ‘activities’, in addition to ‘accomplishment’ and ‘achievement’ coined in Vendler 1957 among others. This classification – state, activity, accomplishment and achievement – has become the prevailing ground of classification of events, accepted in its major parts by most scholars, and it will be used here. A verb can be seen as a phrase, together with
arguments and adverbials. It can change from an activity verb to an accomplishment verb with the help of adverbials. Therefore, instead of event type, the focus is rather laid on situation type.

Among the first writers to present a general basic treatment of aspect is Comrie 1976. Following Holt 1943:6, he defines aspect in its broad sense as “different ways of viewing the internal temporal constituency of a situation” (p. 2). One of the major features of aspect is perfectivity, where he describes the following contrast (p. 3-4): “the whole of the situation … as a single unanalysable whole, with beginning, middle, and end rolled into one” (perfective) versus “explicit reference to the internal temporal constituency of the situation” (imperfective). From this perspective, aspect is the way an event is seen in relation to external circumstances. Imperfective aspect can be subdivided into habituality and continuity and further with respect to progressivity, see (1). Properties such as punctuality and telicity however are regarded as inherent subcategories of perfectivity.

Aspect as a universal phenomena has also been studied by Givón 1984, where he stresses its importance for the sentence as a whole, with its propositional-semantic features. He presents (p. 269) a gradation from lexical-semantic features, “involved in the meaning-structure”, through propositional-semantic features, coding “various facets of the state, event or action”, to discourse-pragmatic features, playing “a crucial role in the sequencing of propositions in discourse, in foregrounding or backgrounding them, and in indicating their time/truth/certainty/probability modalities vis-à-vis the speaker-hearer contract”. He also describes (p. 274) the interaction of boundedness and adds a time-axis with point-of-reference as a basic feature. Givón also assumes habitual-state (see below) and repetitive/ distributive aspect.

(1) Classification of aspectual opposition (Comrie 1976:25).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perfective</th>
<th>Imperfective</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Habitual</td>
<td>Continuous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonprogressive</td>
<td>Progressive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thelin 1990 introduces more systematically the foreground–background distinction in order to account for the discourse function of aspect in Slavic languages. Smith 1991 presents a theory of aspect with the two components situation type and viewpoints, introducing the Neutral viewpoint. Other aspectologists mainly on Russian are Durst-Andersen 1992 and Klein 1994. Verkuyl 1993 stresses the compositional nature of aspect in general, adding the properties of the verb’s arguments.

A survey of aspect is to a great extent given by Frawley 1992 with numerous world-wide examples. He lists (p. 295) at least six principal subgroups, namely imperfective–perfective, atelic–telic, durative–punctual, iterative–semelfactive, progressive and habitual, and assumes further inceptive/incipient/ingressive, terminative/regressive, prospective, retrospective and intensive.

A purely typological approach on aspect is taken by Dahl 1985. Data from 64 languages show how most tense and aspect categories in the world’s languages can be reduced to a small set of cross-linguistic category types. He reflects that the Slavic aspect system compared to other languages appears (p. 69) “rather idiosyncratic in many ways”. This turns up in the marking relations and possibly in iteratives. Also, Slavic languages together with Greek behave as clear exceptions in the aspectual relation to tense. Maybe the most typical cross-linguistic aspectual opposition is the PERFECTIVE:IMPERFECTIVE one (Dahl uses upper case letters for the semantic category), however this is an opposition without clear marking relations. Both members seem equipollent. The common semantic features (except for the prototypical ones) are hard to pin down however.

For marking relations in the Slavic languages, the Imperfective form has according to Dahl 1985:75 a constative general factual or simple denotative meaning. This indicates that Perfective is the marked form, a suggestion also raised by Comrie 1976:113 among others about Russian. Gawrońska 1993:166 argues that the unmarked Imperfective be unmarked for aspect in Polish.

The phenomenon of habituality deserves a special mention. This aspect function has probably developed later than the imperfective, which is not surprising as habituality contains many elements strongly deviant from other properties of imperfective aspect. Comrie 1976:27 calls it a characteristic feature of an extended period of time. Givón 1984 defines habitual on the time dimension; either (p. 273) “at all times” or “unspecified for time”. He stresses the mixed status of habituality (p. 285): “On the one hand, it represents a clear
strong assertion of facts, in the sense defined for the realis … On the other hand, … it is a generic, non-referential expression. And in this sense, the habitual resembles irrealis.” (italics by TG). The parallels with generics are also observed by Frawley 1992:316. Habituality can cover both habitual events as a part of a genetic disposition or ‘simple’ habitual, denoting habits. Both kinds are usually expressed with the same imperfective aspect, although some languages differentiate between them. Habituality occurs mainly in the past.

Besides general theoretical treatments with examples mainly from English and Russian, and pure typological approaches, some language-specific analyses of interest for this article are to be mentioned. Paprotté 1988 gives an account of the discourse function of tense and aspect in Greek (modern), e.g. how change of aspect brings about a transition of event types. Perfectively used, states turn into achievements and/or accomplishments, and imperfectively used, accomplishments turn into activities or states. Gawrońska 1993 with the focus on machine translations stresses the importance of discourse semantics. A successful choice in translations of articles or aspect is achieved by lexical information and a combination of default rules.

Aspect in Greek, Polish and Swedish

In this section, the three languages of the study will be described, first in general terms and then related to the study. All three languages are Indo-European and spoken in Europe: Greek as an independent branch, Polish belonging to the Slavic branch, and Swedish to the Germanic one.

Greek is a typical aspect-language in its traditional sense, though not as focused and thoroughly analysed with respect to aspect as the Slavic languages. There are two aspect forms: Imperfective and Perfective, where the Perfective is derived from the Imperfective with stem alternation. Perfective Past is traditionally labelled Aoristos, a term less suitable to describe its function. There are three tense forms: Present, Preterite and Future. Aspect can be expressed in Past and Future, while Present tense has only an imperfective stem and is regarded as inherently imperfective. Other forms with both Imperfective and Perfective stems are Imperative and the debated ‘subjunctive’ / ‘neuter’ / ‘na-complement’. The latter is in many cases used as the Infinitive in Polish and Swedish, but I choose the term Neuter, following Eklund 1976. The two periphrastic forms, Present Perfect and Past Perfect, have perfective stems. Other verb forms to be mentioned are the imperfective Progressive, the perfective Relative Future and various conditional
constructions. The verbs have subject agreement, expressed with suffixes, and allow pro-drop.

In Polish as a Slavic language, aspect is a basic grammatical category. Of the two aspect forms Imperfective and Perfective, the Perfective forms are usually derived from the Imperfective ones, by prefix or by change of stem. A few verbs have suppletive forms. There are three tense forms, namely Present, Preterite and Future, where aspect can be expressed in Past and Future. Present tense has only an imperfective stem and is regarded as inherently imperfective. Perfective Future is derived from Present, while Imperfective Future is periphrastic. Also Imperative and Infinitive can express aspect. Polish has no Perfect, but the adverbial Preterite Gerund with its perfective stem sometimes serves a similar function. Other verb forms are the imperfective Progressive and various conditional constructions. The verbs have subject agreement, which is expressed with suffixes indicating person and in some forms also gender, and allow pro-drop.

Unlike the Greek aspect, the Polish aspect has the function, in addition to the purely aspectual one, of expressing additional information with the same morphological means. Of the prefixes, which can be several for each verb, one is usually purely aspectual. The others have additional meanings, e.g. podpisać ‘sign’ (lit. ‘under-write’) or popisać ‘write little by little’. From this form it is possible with the help of a suffix -ywa/-iwa to get a new imperfective form denoting iterativity, podpisywać ‘repeatedly sign’.

Swedish does not possess either the grammatical category of aspect or subject agreement and does not allow pro-drop. The three traditionally described tenses are Present, Preterite and Future. Swedish has no indisputable future marker but rather three alternative paraphrases with varying modal connotations. Swedish has the forms Imperative, Infinitive, Present Perfect and Past Perfect. The elder use of Relative Future is substituted with Present Perfect in today’s language. The form corresponding to English Progressive is seldom used. Other constructions such as the conditional are periphrastic as in Greek and Polish.

The fact that Swedish has no morphological aspect does not mean that there are no ways of expressing aspectual functions. There is widespread use of location verbs to express progressivity, e.g. satt och skrev (lit. ‘sat and wrote’) ‘sat writing’, ‘was writing’. A common feature between Swedish and Polish is the use of position markers, e.g. skriva under (lit. ‘under-write’) ‘to sign’. The Swedish phonetically stressed particles roughly correspond to the Polish aspect prefixes and serve to some extent as aspect markers. The
Swedish directional particles can appear with habituals. So can the Polish prefixes, but then with an imperfective suffix. A summary of the major aspect and tense categories is shown in (2). IP=Imperfective, P=Perfective.

All the languages also have verbs without aspect marking. They possess only one, self-evident, aspect on lexical-semantic grounds, connecting Aktionsart. State verbs have by definition an imperfective meaning, while clear achievement verbs are perfective. The most frequent state verb is the copula and existential marker Gr. īme / Po. być / Sw. vara ‘be’, and among the transitive verbs the possessive verb Gr. ēxo / Po. mieć / Sw. ha ‘have’. Consequently they do not have the characteristic double stems in any tense, neither in Greek nor in Polish (and certainly not in Swedish). The Greek verbs káno ‘do’, kséro ‘know’ and periméno ‘wait’ are unmarked for aspect, but their counterparts in Polish do have double forms: robić/zrobić ‘do’, znać/poznać ‘know’ and czekać/poczeekać ‘wait’. Verbs with a perfective meaning are achievement verbs denoting transition, e.g. Sw. bli ‘become’.

An empirical study

Distribution of forms

The corpus consists of extracts from a Swedish children’s book by Astrid Lindgren Alla vi barn i Bullerbyn and their published translations into Greek and Polish. The choice of this text has several reasons. Lindgren is one of the few authors available in the three languages. The principal characters are children with their often immediate discourse and syntax. The style is therefore informal and simple, and the syntax not too distant from that of spoken
language. From the original Swedish books two coherent extracts were chosen more or less at random (p. 18-19, 37-40), which were compared to their translated counterpart. The first one tells how the seven year old girl Lisa gets a room of her own, and the second one how Lisa and her playmates get three kittens. There is an English edition *The six Bullerby children*, but I have usually chosen a more detailed word-for-word representation of the examples.

As for the nouns (see Lindvall 1996), all verbs were registered, and their forms were coded. Imperfective verbs were given the code IP with three degrees: IP1, IP2 and IP3. The first one, IP1, denotes verb forms with ‘double aspect’, i.e. with grammatical aspect independent of tense (Preterite, Future, Imperative, Infinitive/Neuter). The next degree, IP2, contains verb forms with ‘one aspect’, verbs where the aspect is dependent of their tense (Present, Progressive). Finally, IP3 is for the verbs without aspect marking but where the aspect is evident from lexical and/or semantic cues. Their P counterpart is often a suppletive verb, see below. The IP3 verbs in this study are strictly reserved to Sw. *vara* / Gr. *íme* / Po. *być* ‘be’ and Sw. *ha* / Gr. *éxo* / Po. *mieć* ‘have’.

| IP1  | Gr.  | briskóvmoun s’ evνa dwmav/tio vriskómun s’ éna Domátio ‘I found myself in a room’ |
| IP2  | Po.  | Wszyscy ludzie … lubiq chyba kocięta ‘All people like kittens’ |
| IP3  | Sw.  | den öppna spisen, som hon har i sitt rum ‘the open stove that she has in her room’ |

Verbs without any marking for aspect were given a Ø-code.

| Ø    | Sw.  | Jag band fast en papperstuss i ett snöre ‘I fastened a scrunched up piece of paper to a string’ |

Perfective verbs were also given their codes and degrees: P1, P2 and P3. P1 denotes verbs with grammatical ‘double aspect’. P2 is given the verbs with aspect depending on tense, ‘one aspect’ (Present Perfect, Past Perfect, Preterite Gerund). P3 is for verbs that are totally unmarked but with self-evident perfective aspect. They can be seen as suppletive aspect pairs with the IP3s, see above. In this study the P3 category contains only one such transition verb: Sw. *bli* ‘become’. The Greek and Polish equivalents are however not always P, as they can have a progressive/iterative meaning and then an IP form, e.g. Gr. *jínome/jíno* / Po. *zostawać/zostać* ‘become’.

| P1   | Po.  | – Och, czy nie moglibyśmy ich dostać!? |
‘– Oh, couldn’t we get them?’

P2 Gr. H mamá evce ftiavxei ti" kourtiv/ne".
I mamá iče ftiáksi tis kurtínes.
‘Mother had made the curtains.’

P3 Sw. Jag blev så glad så jag skrek högt
‘I became so happy that I shouted loudly’

As for the nouns (see Lindvall 1996), the codes were arranged into a scale after the following system. In the very centre is the bare verb, Ø, unmarked for aspect. Here, only the lexical meaning of the verb is important, not the aspect. The verbs coded with no. 1 are placed near the centre. They consist of verbs with grammatical aspect independently of tense. As they are characterised as ‘double aspect’ they consequently appear on both sides of the centre (Ø); IP1 with an imperfective form and P1 with a perfective. They differ only according to the aspect, and this aspect is expressed by morphological means, prefix and/or stem alternation, not by the tense or lexical content itself. The no. 2s draw away from the centre, diminishing the explicit marking of aspect. The verbs have their aspect only because they belong to a specific tense. IP2 contains tenses denoting progressivity and P2 tenses denoting something finished. The no. 3s have maximal inherent aspect and simultaneously they have minimal morphological marking. The IP3 denotes states and the P3 dynamism.

Consequently, from the centre where the morphological marking is zero, the steps go from morphological aspect unrelated to tense to aspect related to tense, then to the endpoints, with self-evident aspect and little explicit marking.

In the Swedish text, 139 verb phrases appeared. It is never possible to have word-for-word translations, especially not in fiction, and consequently not all verb phrases were translated, only 124 into Greek and 125 into Polish and not always the same ones. Some examples are seen below with their English equivalents and the untranslated verb in italics.
ASPECT MARKING AND SITUATION TYPES

(a) not translated
Sw.  Pappa (a) hade stått nere i snickarboden om kvällarna och (b) trollat fram en byrå och ett runt bord och en hylla och tre stolar
‘Daddy (a) had been standing down in the carpentry workshop in the evenings (b) conjuring up …’

Po.  Tatuś wieczorami (b) wyczarowywał dla mnie w swoim warsztacie stolarskim …
‘Daddy in the evenings (b) was conjuring up for me in his carpentry shop …’

(b) not translated
Sw.  Hon (a) kokade kaffe också i en kaffekokare som (b) stod på tre ben mitt i brasan.
‘She also (a) prepared coffee in a coffee pot that (b) stood on three legs in the middle of the fire.’

Gr.  kai ma" (a) prósfere kai kafe.√
‘and she also (a) served us coffee.’

The first example is an illustration of the Swedish way of expressing progressivity with postural verbs, ‘sit and’, ‘stand and’, etc. This is not necessary in Polish which has its grammatical aspect. In the second example the translation is more concentrated than the original. Sometimes a sentence is translated into one language but not into the other. Thus, after deletions of everything but full verb phrases in all three languages, the number was 114. The general distribution of forms can be seen in (3).

To begin with IP3, where the aspect is indicated on lexical grounds, the distribution is fairly even among the three languages. The number for explicit imperfective aspect (IP2+IP1) is lower in Greek than in Polish, and null in Swedish. The distribution of perfective aspect is mirror-imaged: higher in Greek than in Polish. The Greek and Swedish forms Present Perfect and Past Perfect are far more common than the Polish semantic equivalent, the adverbial Preterite Gerund. One Greek Past Perfect verb is unmarked for aspect (íçe káni ‘had done/made’). If one disregards the lexical aspect, IP3 and P3, there is a dominance of perfective verbs.

Translations of forms
This section presents how the original text was translated into each language and how the translations correspond to the original. It is assumed that the aspect categories in Greek and Polish correspond to each other. Swedish is the source language, and being a ‘non-aspect language’ it gives no morphological clues to the choice of aspect. But as the aspect is evoked from the context and
(3) General distribution of verbs with imperfective and perfective marking in the Greek, Polish and Swedish texts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gr.</th>
<th>Po.</th>
<th>Sw.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IP3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IP2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IP1</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ø</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>19*</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*For Greek, one Past Perfect verb is unmarked for aspect (íçe kána ‘had done/made’). It is placed on the P line because of its tense category.
**For Swedish, the verbs are placed on the IP line because of their tense categories. They are not imperfective but neutral for aspect.
***For Swedish, the verbs are placed on the P line because of their tense categories. They are not perfective but neutral for aspect.

discourse, there are reasons to believe that the Greek and Polish translators independently make similar choices from the given discourse. A few words have to be said about the translations. It is a well known fact that translations differ to some extent from original texts, due to ‘translationese’. It is to be assumed that a similar text originally written in Greek and Polish respectively would differ slightly from the present translations. However, in my current dissertation, several original texts reaffirm similar results as those presented below, and the risk of ‘translationese’ seems to be of minor importance.

The results in (4) show correspondence between the forms of each language. The translation process is shown from Swedish to Greek (A) and from Swedish to Polish (B), i.e. from Ø in the source language to various aspect and tense forms in the target languages. Then the aspect forms are compared between Greek and Polish (C).

The general impression is an extensive correspondence between the Greek and Polish forms. Imperfective in Greek is Imperfective in Polish, and Perfective in Greek is Perfective in Polish, although the translators have chosen aspect independently of each other from the Swedish Ø-form. This indicates that aspect is obviously ‘hiding’ in the Swedish discourse, although not expressed on the surface. The cases where the aspect choice is not similar have several explanations. Often there is another verb:
(4) Comparison between the aspect forms in the Swedish original text and the Greek and Polish translations

A. Swedish to Greek

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Swedish</th>
<th>Greek</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IP3 23</td>
<td>IP3 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IP1 2</td>
<td>IP1 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>P1 3</td>
<td>P1 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2 1</td>
<td>P2 2</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Swedish</th>
<th>Greek</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IP3 23</td>
<td>IP3 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IP2 2</td>
<td>IP1 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>P1 3</td>
<td>P1 3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

B. Swedish to Polish

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Swedish</th>
<th>Polish</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IP3 23</td>
<td>IP3 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IP1 2</td>
<td>IP1 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P1 3</td>
<td>P1 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2 1</td>
<td>P2 2</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Swedish</th>
<th>Polish</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IP3 23</td>
<td>IP3 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IP2 2</td>
<td>IP1 3</td>
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<td>P1 3</td>
<td>P1 3</td>
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C. Greek compared to Polish

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greek</th>
<th>Polish</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IP3 15</td>
<td>IP3 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IP2 2</td>
<td>IP1 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>IP1 1</td>
<td>IP1 4</td>
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<td>P1 3</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greek</th>
<th>Polish</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IP3 20</td>
<td>IP3 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IP1 4</td>
<td>IP1 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P1 4</td>
<td>P1 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

P1 Gr. "divýple" sto eidíkov thgávni, pou evbále pavénw sth fwtiáv
Díples sto iDikó tíVáni, pu évale páno sti fótía
‘waffles in the special pan, that she put over the fire’

IP1 Po. wafli w szczycach. Szczypce te trzymała nad ogniem.
‘waffles in tongs. That tongs she held over the fire.’
Another reason is the Greek use of past tense in indirect past quotations, where Polish has present, and present is always imperfective:

P1 Gr. eνιωσα sa na bgv/kame ... apo√ to spi√ti
ένιωσα sa na vjíkame ... apó to spíti
‘I felt as if we went out of the house’

It is however more interesting to see when Greek and Polish choose different aspects of the same verb:

P1 Gr. Meta√ xananebh√kame ti" skav√le".
Μετά καναναίκαμε τις σκάλες
‘Then we went upstairs.’

IP1 Po. a po chwili szli√my znów w górę po schodach.
‘and after a while we were walking again upstairs.’

P1 Gr. Thn parakal√same, th cilioparakal√same
Την παρακάλησαμε, τη χιλιοπαρακάλησαμε
‘We asked her, thousand-asked her’

Relation to situation types
The previous section demonstrated how translations from one non-aspect language to two aspect languages independently gave highly consistent agreement in the choice of aspect. This section will discuss how the choice of aspect derives from the situation types, and thereby how the question of aspect goes beyond the use of grammatical forms. With Verkuyl’s (1993:35) interpretation of Vendler’s four time schemata as a background, I conclude that state verbs are imperfective by definition, activity and accomplishment.
verbs can be either imperfective or perfective, and achievement verbs are perfective by definition. However, in an iterative or habitual sense, the last ones can take the imperfective form.

Low degree of dynamism
With these considerations I will examine the situation types lying behind the Swedish verbs and how they appear in the translations. Here, only the Swedish sentences will be coded to English, as the Greek and Polish equivalents express more or less the same propositional content. The first major issue to be discussed is the property of dynamism. The situation type with the lowest degree of dynamism is the stable stative situations or states. In this study, all three languages use verbs without aspect marking, e.g. ‘be’, i.e. inherently imperfective, IP3. More temporary states, e.g. ‘stay’, ‘stand’, are expressed by Ø-marked verbs in Swedish or, for Greek and Polish, IP. It is not uncommon that such postural verbs in Swedish are used to express duration of another verb, here ‘wave’.

Ø Sw. Farmor bodde hos oss när jag var liten
IP Gr. H giagia√ evmene mazí ma" ovtan hvmoun mikrh√
I jiajia épemene mazí mas ótan ímun mikrí
IP Po. Babcia mieszkala u nas, gdy bytam mała
‘Grandma lived with us when I was small’

Ø Sw. Och i fönstret där stod Britta och Anna och vinkade åt mej.
IP Gr. eída ... thn Mprivtá kai thn √Anna na stevkontai sto parávuro kai na me cairétaνέ.
íDa … tin Bríta ke tin Ánna na stékonte sto paráTiro ke na me cérétâne
IP Po. W oknie stały Britta i Anna i machały do mnie rękomą.
‘And at the window there Britta and Anna were standing waving at me.’

Other properties are durativity and continuity. While states are inherently durative, dynamic situations express various degrees between durativity and punctuality. Durative, continuous activities are expressed by a few verbs in the text. In Swedish they are Ø-marked, but again a postural verb can be used to express durativity, or the verb phrase hålla på att ‘be busy’ (cf. hålla ‘hold’). Greek and Polish have indisputably an IP stem. It is hard to imagine any purely aspectual P counterpart. A P form would for leżaly ‘lay’ indicate an
inchoative event, and for Gr. *niaúrizan / Po. miauczały* ‘mew’ a punctual one, ‘mewed once’.

Ø  Sw.  Dom låg i en korg och jamade
IP  Gr.  Ta gatav/kia niaouvrízan mev’ sa s’ ev’ na kalaqí
IP  Po.  Ležaly w koszyku, miauczały

‘They lay in a basket and mewed’

A special role is played by *habituals*. They can occur as discontinuous *activities* over a longer period of time. They resemble states, in that they can be generic and denote characteristics of the executor, a part of the genetic predisposition or a customary habit. They are often accompanied by adverbials such as *always* and can occur in present tense. Swedish verbs are Ø-marked, Greek and Polish have IP.

Ø  Sw.  Han drack inte som mänskor gör, utan han … slickade i sej mjölken.
IP  Gr.  To’ /pine me th roz glwssi/tsa.
IP  Po.  Nie pil tak, jak piją ludzie, lecz … wlizywał w siebie mleko.

‘He (=the kitten) did not drink like people do, but he … lapped up the milk.’

Ø  Sw.  pappa snickrar alltid om vintrarna
IP  Gr.  o mpampa’” pa’ nta ftiav’ cnei pra’ gmata … to ceimw’ na o babás pánta ftiáxni prá’ vmata … to çimóna
IP  Po.  tatuś zawsze w zimie zajmuje się stolarką

‘but daddy is always doing carpentry in winter time’

The most interesting situations are the *habitual achievements*. They share all the properties of achievements (dynamic, punctual, telic) but they occur repeatedly. Habituals are formed in Polish as well as in other Slavic languages in a derived way, the ‘derived imperfectives’. From a continuous IP verb the punctual P is derived with a prefix or a stem alternation. The habitual IP is derived back from the punctual P with the help of a suffix. In the Swedish extract, the reader has to go through a good deal of the text before it is obvious that the events are habitual, especially as the preceding text describes a row of punctual events. This habituality is not signalled until the adverbial *i början* ‘in the beginning’). The Greek and Polish translations have IP.
Ø  Sw.  Jag (a) *band fast* en papperstuss i ett snöre och (b) *sprang* runt med det, och Murre (c) *sprang efter* och (d) *försökte* få fatt i papperet. Lasse och Bosse (e) *lekte* också med honom i början, men dom tröttnade snart.

IP  Gr.  (a)*'Edena zarwme*ν no cartiv s’ evv na spavgko ki (b) *etreca guv/rw trabv/nta*" to kai to Marάκι χωπί*sw mou* (d) *prospaqou*ve na piavsei to cartiv*. Sthn archv (e) *pavzane maziv* tou ki o lar" kai o Pip, suv*ntoma ov*mw" barevqhkan  
(a) *'EDena zaromέno xartí s’ éna spáVko ki (b) étreça jíro jíro travόntas to ke to Marάκι ksopí*ν μu (d) *prospάTú*se na piás* to xartí. Stin arçí (e) *pέzane mazí tu ki o Lar* ke o Pip, sintoma ómos varέTikan

IP  Po.  (a) *Przywiązywałam kułkę z papieru do sznurka i (b) biegalam z tym w kółko, a Mruczek (c) biegł za mną i (d) starał się schwytać papier. Lasse i Bosse (e) bawili się z nim tez z początku, lecz wkrótce im się sprzykrzyło

‘I (a) *fastened* a scrunched up piece of paper to a string and (b) *ran around* with it, and Murre (c) *ran after* and (d) *tried* to catch the paper. Lasse and Bosse also *played* with him in the beginning, but they soon tired’

**Diffuse intermediate stages**
From clear cases of indisputable IP form to these with indisputable P form, there are intermediate stages where Greek and Polish differ in-between themselves or each language has internal variations. Non-habitual activities can be durative but discontinuous, *iterative*. In such cases Greek and Polish differ, in that Greek tends to have P verbs and Polish IP.

Ø  Sw.  Och vi *tiggde och bad*

P  Gr.  Thn *parakalévsame, th cilioparakalévsame*  
Tin *parakalévsame, ti cilioparakalévsame*

IP  Po.  *Prosilǐśmy więc i błagali*

‘We were begging and pleading’

A higher degree of dynamism is represented by the property of *telicity*, i.e. where the event brings about a change. Some events are only telic but not puntical, corresponding to Vendler’s accomplishments. In Greek and Polish both IP and P verbs occur. In Swedish such verbs are Ø, sometimes with a directional particle strengthening the telicity e.g. *bort* ‘away’, which is semantically equivalent to the Polish prefix *od-* ‘away’. 
jag tänker spara till en cykel

‘I am saving up for a bicycle’

hon var tvungen att ge bort allihop utom en

‘she had to give them all away except one’

High degree of dynamism

Dynamic events are, if not durative, usually connected to the property of punctuality. Such verbs, punctual but not telic, are very few in the text, mainly perception verbs. In Swedish, the punctual effect is strengthened with the verb komma att ‘happen to’. Another mean of expressing punctuality in Swedish is the particle till ‘to’, however this was not present in this text. Greek and Polish punctual verbs are indisputably P. An IP would indicate continuity.

Men så kom jag att titta ut genom fönstret, och då såg jag Norrgårdens gavel

Kiedy jednak wyjrzałem przez okno, zobaczyłem … poddasze Zagrody Północnej

But the great majority of the remaining verbs describe both punctual and telic events, corresponding to Vendler’s achievements. In Greek and Polish they are P. Again, the Swedish verbs can be strengthened by directional particles, here ut ‘out’, semantically equivalent to the Polish wy- ‘out’. But as mentioned earlier, it seems that this particle/prefix is used to mark telicity rather than punctuality.
(5) Aspectual subgroups related to the degree of dynamism in Greek, Polish and Swedish

Degrees of dynamism: Expressed by:

Low degree of dynamism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greek</th>
<th>Polish</th>
<th>Swedish</th>
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<tr>
<td>IP</td>
<td>IP</td>
<td>IP</td>
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</table>
1. Stable states

2. Temporary states

3. Continuous activities

4. Habitual activities

5. Habitual achievements

Intermediate stages

6. Iterative activities

7. Telic accomplishments

High degree of dynamism

8. Punctual activities

9. Punctual and telic achievements

Ø  Sw.  Lasse valde ut vilken vi skulle ha.

P  Gr.  O Lar" diax\l exe to dikov/ ma".
     O Lars Diálekse to Dikó mas.

P  Po.  Kociątko dla nas wybral Lasse.
     ‘Lasse chose which one we should have.’

Some verbs are ambiguous as to their durativity. The translators too, obviously confused, interpreted them as durative, hence IP, but in addition to this IP stem, they have also added a modal P verb.

Ø  Sw.  Jag blev så glad så jag skrek högt
     ‘I got so happy that I shouted loudly’

P+IP Gr.  To\v so eiv\c a eucaristhqeiv\v pou a\vc isa na tsiriz\zw
          Tóso ixα efkaristiTí pu árcisa na tsirízo
     ‘So much I was pleased that I began to shout’

P+IP Po.  Ucieszyłam się tak bardzo, że zaczęłam głośno wykrzykiwać
     ‘I got so happy that I began loudly shout’

Taken together, the verbs in the text show strikingly regular patterns of correspondence between situation type and grammatical form. The functions are degrees of dynamism, where boundedness, punctuality and telicity play important roles. The forms are connected with tense and expressed with stems, prefixes and particles. With these considerations, the aspectual subgroups related to dynamism are listed in (5).
Summary
The categorisation above has given some concepts for a general discussion of aspect. The differences between the three languages Greek, Polish and Swedish are several, but my aim is to illustrate their similarities.

The underlying basis is the question of *dynamism*, with some subproperties: *continuity/punctuality*, *iterativity*, *telicity* and *habituality*. In all three languages the first extreme endpoint expresses the unbounded state. This is expressed in the same way, with the state verbs Gr. *íme* / Po. *być* / Sw. *vara* ‘be’ and Gr. *éxo* / Po. *mieć* / Sw. *ha* ‘have’. They denote an absolute absence of dynamism. The languages have no morphological alternative to this absolute imperfective aspect, no ‘double form’. The other extreme endpoint expresses the utmost dynamism, such as Swedish *bli* ‘become’. Also Greek and Polish have their ‘become’ counterparts but with double stems, Gr. *jínome/jíno* where the imperfective form denotes progressivity and Po. *zostawać/zostać* where it denotes iterativity.

It seems that in Greek, the most important criterion is the one of *continuity*, at the price of iterativity. If an event is continuous then verb has to be Imperfective, but if punctual then Perfective, *even when the punctual event occurs iteratively*. Iterativity thus plays a less important role than continuity in the marking of Greek aspect. In Polish, however, iterativity is an important criterion. If a punctual event occurs iteratively, then the verb has to be Imperfective, *because it occurs iteratively*.

Another borderline case is the one between telicity and punctuality. Telicity with continuity gives Imperfective marking in both Greek and Polish. Thus, telicity alone does not seem to be sufficient for Perfective. This can be seen in contrast to punctuality, which alone gives Perfective marking. In combination, however, telicity together with punctuality is an unbeatable candidate for Perfective.

In this article, aspect has mainly been treated in the form of the *Perfective* stem. It must not be forgot that the Polish perfective verbs with prefixes can be the source of derivations of new *Imperfective* stems. For example, Polish tends to use ‘simple’ Imperfective for process and iterativity but ‘derived’ Imperfective for habitual achievements. The semantic value of these prefixes is equivalent to the (postposed) verb particles in Swedish. Swedish also possesses other means of expressing aspect, such as added verb phrases, adverbials, etc. This problem has not been sufficiently covered in this article, but it is assumed that a systematic treatment of prefixes and particles would give even clearer patterns of the subcategories of aspect and their marking. That would
hopefully puncture the unfortunate dichotomy of languages into ‘aspect languages’ and ‘non-aspect languages’.

The problems treated in this article give rise to several new questions. What more exactly is the role of the aspectual property habituality? And the intermediate stages of iterative activities and telic accomplishments, where two features compete? What are the connections between aspect and other verbal categories such as tense and modality? And last but not least: can aspectual properties of the whole verb phrase, the whole sentence including objects and even subjects, be expressed by the nominal properties of these arguments? The connection between aspect and case, for e.g. Finnish, is well-known, but what about other nominal properties such as definiteness? This problem is treated in my current dissertation and will hopefully shed more light on the fascinating field of aspect.

References


*Corpus*

