

From the editors

One of the currently most studied topics in the field of verbal aspect and its grammaticalization is *aspectual prefixation* (a.k.a. *preverbatization*). It is an established fact that in the Slavic languages (the most well-studied in terms of aspect, being traditionally considered prototypical as far as this grammatical category is concerned) the aspect system is based on perfective forms arising from the merger of verbal bases with prefixes acting as *bounders* (*ограничители*), which originally performed the function of markers of adverbial meanings. These prefixal morphemes (called simply *prefixes* or *preverbs* by different authors) added meanings related to the spatial location or dynamics of the predicate, but subsequently, in the diachronic process of grammaticalization, they acquired more abstract meanings, first among them that of *event culmination*, i.e. the attainment of the inherent *final bound* (*предел*) of the event, which is at the basis of *perfectivity* (as manifested in Slavic). Similar developments have also characterized other languages (non-Slavic, some belonging to the Indo-European stock, but by no means exclusively); these languages are also characterized by the presence of preverbs in their verbal system.

The studies collected in the present volume pursue this line of research, analyzing and comparing not only different Slavic languages, but also other languages (both Indo-European and non-Indo-European), which at some level also display the category of verbal aspect as well as the phenomenon of preverbatization (whether still productive or not any longer). More precisely, the studies in this collection attempt to shed light on the variation to be found in verbal systems that use preverbs as perfectivizers by identifying the ways such morphemes are used and the limitations on their use. Another line of research pursued in this volume attempts to outline various possible paths of grammaticalization (and lexicalization) which the morphemes involved in various aspect system may undergo. All this is done in order to arrive at a deeper knowledge of the category of verbal aspect, with special focus on the Slavic phenomenology.

Attention is also paid to the grammaticalization pathways leading to the formation of aspect systems in situations of language contact, a theme to which three works are dedicated. Arkad'ev focuses on the peculiarities of the aspect systems developed by non-Slavic languages in situations of contact with Slavic languages (Yiddish, Romani, Livonian and Istroromanian). Two papers (Bena-

ccchio and Steenwijk; Breu, Pila and Scholze), on the other hand, focus on the grammaticalization of aspect in minority Slavic varieties that have developed in situations of contact with Romance or Germanic languages.

Other studies focus on ancient languages: Bertocci analyses the aspectual properties of some Latin preverbs, and Kamphuis aims to define more precisely the contribution of preverbatation to the development of Slavic verbal aspect in the historical phase represented by Old Church Slavonic, which displays a situation still far from that of modern Slavic varieties.

The diachronic pathways leading to the emergence of Slavic verbal aspect are dealt with in Dickey's study, which focuses on the analysis of the preverb *u-*, which is argued to have played a key role in the development of the perfectivizing function of Slavic preverbs. Wiemer's contribution is dedicated to the interplay of the morphological mechanisms of prefixation and suffixation in the various stages of grammaticalization of various Slavic aspect systems.

Focusing on modern Slavic languages, Esvan explores the mechanisms of perfectivization and imperfectivization of verbal loans in contemporary Czech, while Slavkova compares the behaviour of the superlexical prefix *po-* in Bulgarian and Russian. Modern Russian is dealt with by Ruvoletto, who explores the functions that preverbatation can assume with the class of verbs of indeterminate motion. The same language is the topic of Plungjan's paper: starting from a diachronic analysis of the (bi)aspectual value of the Russian verb *past'*, the author describes a particular case in the formation of aspectual pairs in this language, i.e. the so-called "two-stem perfectivization". Also focusing on Russian (though on the background of a comparative Slavic perspective), Petrushina's study deals with some important theoretical and terminological issues concerning the grammaticalization of aspect and the formation of the aspectual pairs.

Finally, Muro's paper is dedicated to the phenomenon of preverb stacking, especially productive in some Slavic languages such as Bulgarian; his contribution also contains the first attempt at a typological classification of the phenomenon, taking into consideration linguistic areas very far from Slavic, such as North and Central America.

This volume is the result of over five years of research activities carried out by the members of the research group *ASP: Slavic verbal aspect in a diachronic, comparative and typological perspective*, initiated in 2011 at the University of Padua under the supervision of Rosanna Benacchio. The group included Ph.D. students and grantees of the Department of Linguistic and Literary Studies. In 2013, the coordinator was awarded funding for the University Project *Slavic verbal aspect: grammaticalization in a comparative and typological perspective, with special reference to prefixation*. This project culminated in the workshop *The Role of Prefixes in the Formation of Aspect and related categories* (Padua, 28-29 September 2015). The volume is a collection of papers presented at the workshop, which also saw the participation of the members of the *ASP* group.

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