

Primary and Derived States in Bulgarian

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This paper deals with derived stative predicates in Bulgarian (with a recourse to Russian and English where relevant), that is, stative verbs that have acquired their aspectual characteristics as the result of a reconsideration of the primary meaning of verbs belonging to other aspectual classes. I consider in parallel the source active verb senses and the resulting stative meanings. As an indispensable part of the analysis of the change in meaning I explore the thematic structure (using Frame Semantics conceptual frames, cf. Baker et al. 1998, Rupenhoffer et al. 2016, among others) and the syntactic expression of the resulting verbs as compared with their active counterparts. The goal is to provide as full as possible a systematisation of the verb classes involved, the conditions of aspectual derivation and the semantic, syntactic and – where needed – morphological properties of the resulting stative verbs.

To the best of my knowledge, the first to comment on the so-called *habits* was Vendler (1967), who noted that predicates denoting occupations, dispositions, abilities and the like are in fact states (1b), which have emerged as a result of the reconsideration of verb meanings originally belonging to other (dynamic) aspectual classes (1a), compare:

(1)

- a. BG: *Toy **pushi** nervno otvan.*
EN: He **is smoking** nervously outside.
- b. BG: *Toy **pushi** tri kutii tsigari dnevno.*
EN: He **smokes** 3 packs of cigarettes a day.

Not only activities (1a), but all Vendlerian aspectual classes have “habit-forming” potential (Vendler 1967), e.g., accomplishments (2a):

(2)

- a. BG: *Stivan King **pishe** nov roman.*
EN: Stephen King **is writing** a new novel.
- b. BG: *Stivan King **pishe** romani na uzhasite.*

EN: Stephen King **writes** horror novels.

Within the Slavic linguistic tradition, Paducheva (1996, 2004) has studied in detail the aspectual properties of predicates and the relationship between thematic (semantic) classes of verbs and their aspectual characterisation. The main distinction she outlines within the domain of stative predicates is the one between *properties* (permanent attributes) and *states* (which may in turn be temporary or permanent). In a similar vein to Vendler's proposal, she posits two additional subcategories within the category of stative verbs, called 'occupations' (*teach, war*) and 'behaviours' (*gossip, philosophise*), which share many of the properties of stative predicates but have been derived from other aspectual classes on the basis of their becoming habitual, characteristic of the subject over an extensive time interval.

Taking as a point of departure these and other similar observations in the existing literature, below I note on several classes of dynamic verbs systematically resulting in stative readings and sketch the semantic and syntactic changes involved to exemplify the approach to be followed in the study.

One of the classes where such shifts occur are dynamic verbs denoting change of location, such as *presicham* (*cross*), *preminavam* (*pass*), *lakatusha* (*meander*), which serve as the basis for derivation of morphologically identical stative verbs denoting spatial configuration or trajectory, also known as "geographic verbs" (Apresyan 1986: 25).

Let's consider the thematic structure of the source verbs. The Theme argument in (3a) is a self-moving, possibly animate entity that undergoes change of location, while in (3b) it is a form or structure with a particular spatial extension. (3b) expresses not a dynamic situation of movement but a static spatial relation. The semantic representation adopted below is based on the conceptual frames in FrameNet¹ (Baker et al. 1998, Rupenhoffer et al. 2016) or a derivation of such frame posited by the author where a relevant one is not identified.

(3) []THEME ____ []AREA []PATH (frame Traversing)
> []PATH_SHAPE ____ []AREA (frame Path shape)

a. BG: [Turistite]THEME **presichat** [gorata] AREA [po zhivopisen pat]
PATH.

¹ <https://framenet2.icsi.berkeley.edu/>

EN: [The hikers] THEME **are crossing** [the forest] AREA [along a picturesque path] PATH.

b. BG: [*Patyat*] PATH_SHAPE **presicha** [*gorata*] AREA.

EN: [The path] PATH_SHAPE **crosses** [the forest] AREA.

As shown in the examples, a number of other changes, besides the dynamic > stative shift occur:

- (1) the subject (Theme) argument of the three-place active predicate in (3a) is removed from the thematic structure (3b);
- (2) the PP (Path) argument is promoted to the subject position; the Area argument remains in the direct object position;
- (3) the imperfective aspect verb used in the sentence has only a stative reading as it denotes a property – form or configuration – of a geographical formation or a physical object; an inchoative reading of the sentence is hence impossible.

Similar observations may be offered with respect to other classes of verbs: dynamic creation verbs and their stative counterparts that denote a relationship between a whole and its part(s): *obrazuvam*, *oformyam*, *formiram* (*form*, *make up*), *sazdavam* (*create*), *sastavyam* (*compose*) (Example 4); verbs of causing a cognitive state and stative dispositions (Paducheva 2004: 269): *obyasnyavam* (*explain*), *oprovergavam* (*disprove*), *ubezhdavam* (*convince*), *potvarzhdavam* (*confirm*), *predskazvam* (*predict*) (Example 5):

(4) [] AGENT/CAUSER ____ [] CREATED_OBJECT [] MATERIAL/COMPONENTS (frame Building)

> [] MATERIAL/COMPONENTS _____ [] CREATED_OBJECT

a. BG: [*Detsata*] AGENT **oformyat** [*naves*] CREATED_OBJECT [*ot lista*] MATERIAL.

EN: [The children] AGENT **are making** [a canopy] CREATED_OBJECT [out of leaves] MATERIAL.

b. BG: [*Listata*] MATERIAL **oformyat** [*naves*] CREATED_OBJECT.

EN: [The leaves] MATERIAL **form** [a canopy] CREATED_OBJECT.

(5) []INSPECTOR ____ []CONTENT []MEDIUM (frame Evidence)
 > [] MEDIUM ____ [] CONTENT

a. BG: [Toy]INSPECTOR **podkrepi** [razkaza si]CONTENT [s fakti]MEDIUM.
 EN: [He] INSPECTOR **confirmed** [his story] CONTENT [with facts]
 MEDIUM.

b. BG: [Faktite]MEDIUM **podkrepyat** [razkaza mu]CONTENT.
 EN: [The facts] MEDIUM **confirm** [his story] CONTENT.

In the observed classes, the source thematic structure is reduced by removing the subject participant (often an Agent/Causer) involved in the dynamic situation (i.e., the performer that carries out the activity or action), while the PP participant (usually an instrumental or means-like participant), to which the activity-derived property, disposition or the like is assigned, is promoted to the subject position. The thematic structure change is associated with an aspectual change whereby the resulting verbs come to denote a permanent attribute of an entity. As such they only have a stative interpretation and not an inchoative one.

A different case is presented by dynamic verbs that result in stative predicates denoting states (not properties). Relevant classes that display this process are verbs of putting, covering, wrapping, etc., which involve the movement (initiated and performed by an Agent/Causer) of a Theme with respect to a Goal and its coming to be in contact with it (filling it, wrapping it, etc.): *pokrivam* (cover), *obgrazhdam* (surround), *skrivam* (hide), *zaslonyavam* (shroud), *zakrivam* (block, conceal), *zabulvam* (veil), *ukrasyavam* (adorn), *oseyvam* (strew), among others.

Again, the Agent/Causer argument is removed, thus leading to statives denoting either a state of the Theme being in contact with a Location or an inchoative situation whereby a Theme comes to be in contact with a Goal (the distinction between Goal and Location accounts for the difference between movement and stationary configuration) (Example 6).

(6) []AGENT/CAUSE ____ []GOAL []THEME > [] THEME ____ []LOCATION/GOAL

- a. BG: [Vyatarat]_{CAUSE} **pokriva** [moravata]_{GOAL} [s otlomki]_{THEME}.
 EN: [The wind]_{CAUSE} **is covering** [the lawn]_{GOAL} [with debris]_{THEME}.
- b. BG: [Otlomkite]_{THEME} bavno **pokrivat** [moravata]_{GOAL}.
 EN: [Debris]_{THEME} **is slowly covering** [the lawn]_{GOAL}.
- c. BG: Kakto obiknoveno, [vsyakakvi otlomki]_{THEME} **pokrivat** [moravata]_{LOCATION}.
 EN: As usual, [all kind of debris]_{THEME} **covers** [the lawn]_{LOCATION}.

The inchoative verbs denote an internally induced change of state. Their end state is denoted by the stative counterparts.

The further analysis will be directed to confirming and refining the preliminary observations and at outlining the types of semantic, syntactic and morphological changes that occur in the derivation of stative predicates. Not least, parallels will be drawn between the Bulgarian (Slavic) processes of thematic structure rearrangement and the alternations described for English (e.g., in Jackendoff 1990 and Levin 1993).

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