

WALTER BREU (Konstanz)

Aspect forms and functions in Sorbian varieties*

Zjeće

Tutón přinošk zaběra so z formu a funkcijemi werbalneho aspekta w třoch serbskich warietach, we woběmaj spisownymaj rěčomaj a w (katolskej) hornjoserbskej wobchadnej rěči. Nastupajo formalne kategorije, předležitej zasadnje dwaj typaj, deriwatiwny typ perfektiwnosće z opoziciju perfektiwneho a imperfektiwneho aspekta, kotraž eksistuje we wšěch słowjanskich rěčach, a flektiwny typ wobmjezowany na syntetiski preteritum (aorist : imperfekt). Posledni typ, kotryž namakamy hewak jenož w južnosłowjanskich rěčach, njeje pak samostatny, dokelž wustupuje přeco w krutej kombinaciji z deriwatiwnym aspektom. Nimo toho njeeksistuje flektiwna opozicija w delnjoserbskich dialektach a wobhlada so džensa w delnjoserbskej spisownej rěči jako kumštna forma a w hornjoserbskej wobchadnej rěči wobmjezuje so na modalne a někotre druhe werby. Deriwatiwny typ zwuraznja so we wšěch serbskich warietach na samsne wašnje z aspektowymi porikami, kotrež so ze sufiksami, prefiksami abo přez supletiwnosć tworja. Mjez tym zo so spisownej rěči w aspektowych funkcijach runatej, z někotrymi rozdžělemi k ruskej rěči, kaž na př. wužiwanjom perfektiwneho aspekta w iteratiwnych kontekstach, ma hornjoserbska wobchadna rěč cyle hinaši system, kotryž bazuje na gramatikalizowanej opoziciji terminatiwnosće. Fungowanje aspekta we wšěch warietach wopisuje so z teoriju interakcije leksiki z aspektom (ILA), a to w formje dweju typow aspektowych operacijow, statusoweho a fokusoweho aspekta. Džzensniše aspektowe systemy so wjasnja přez indirektny wliw rěčneho kontakta z němскеj rěču.

Keywords: Sorbian, typology, aspect, grammaticalization, language contact

1. Introduction

There are basically two formal types of verbal aspect in the Slavic languages, an inflectional one of the imperfect-aorist type and the grammatically derivational type, expressed by stem oppositions and generally known as the Slavic opposition of perfectivity. The inflectional type is, in principle, restricted to South Slavic languages, where it is commonly used in Bulgarian and Macedonian, completely absent in modern Slovenian and restricted to formal literary style in the Serbo-Croatian Standard languages (Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian etc.), except for its productivity in some – mainly Central and South-Eastern – dialects. The only exception to this geographical distribution is the Sorbian language group, which, in principle, has both formal aspect oppositions, in spite of its affiliation to West Slavic.

In this paper, I discuss the aspectual systems of three varieties of Sorbian, Standard Lower Sorbian (SLS), Standard Upper Sorbian (SUS), and Colloquial Upper Sorbian

* The present paper was written as part of the *Sonderforschungsbereich* 471 “Variation and Evolution in the Lexikon” at the University of Konstanz (Constance), supported by the German Research Foundation (DFG), project A15 “Total Language Contact of Slavic Micro-Languages”. My thanks go to LENKA SCHOLZE, researcher in this project, for her comments on specific problems of the functions of verbal aspect in the varieties of Sorbian, especially in Colloquial Upper Sorbian.

(CUS), but with an emphasis on Upper Sorbian. By CUS I understand the vernacular¹ of the South-Western part of the Upper Sorbian language area in the former district of Kamenz (SUS: Kamjenc), now part of the *Landkreis* of Bautzen (Budyšin), based on the dialects of the Catholic population of this area. This is the so-called “core region” of modern Upper Sorbian² in the rural communities of Crostwitz (Chrósćicy) and Ralbitz/Rosenthal (Ralbicy/Róžant) and their surroundings, as only in this region Sorbian continues to be used in everyday life by the Sorbian-German bilinguals living there, with small children still being monolingual Sorbs. German enters the families mainly by means of modern mass media, whereas Sorbian is dominant in everyday life, even in the communication with the local authorities and in school education. While older people still use their dialect variants, younger people below their fifties are native speakers of CUS, which differs in many respects from both its (Catholic) dialect substrate and SUS.³

In the core region we face a situation of diglossia, with Standard Upper Sorbian restricted to formal speech, school lessons, church services, newspapers and to radio and television broadcastings as well as to conversations with Sorbians from outside. The characteristics of CUS, distinguishing it from SUS, are not restricted to a higher number of loanwords from German, but concern important parts of grammar and phonology as well. Among other things, in CUS personal pronouns are used obligatorily, an article system with a regularly used definite and indefinite article has developed, the dual has been reduced to a dependent form governed by the number ‘two’ and the pronoun ‘both’, the passive is formed with the auxiliary *hodwać* borrowed from German *werden* ‘become’, an expletive *to* has been introduced by calquing German *es* ‘it’, in the vowel system a length opposition has developed, and so on. Though certain tendencies towards these features can be observed in the Sorbian dialects as well, only CUS has regularized them in a decisive way. All these changes are to a large extent due to language contact with German, which has exerted its influence for centuries on all Sorbian varieties, but in CUS its effects have not been suppressed by purist tendencies as in Standard Upper Sorbian. On the other hand, it is due to the influence of SUS in Sorbian schools that certain dialect characteristics have disappeared in Colloquial Upper Sorbian.

2. The formal expression of aspect oppositions in Sorbian varieties

2.1. The full system of verbal aspects in Standard Upper Sorbian

Standard Upper Sorbian, *hornjoserbska spisowna rěč*, developed from a Protestant and a Catholic tradition with several variants from the 16th up to the mid of the 19th century. Since then a widely unified norm has been used, based essentially on the Protestant tradi-

¹ In informal style, CUS is increasingly used in written form, too, e.g. in internet communication and short messages (SCHOLZE 2008: 36), and it is a source for mistakes in school essays (WERNER 1996). More or less deliberately, “Catholic” characteristics appear even in official texts, e.g. in the new edition of the *Wosadnik* (Catholic prayer book).

² See the statistics in ELLE (1992) for the differences in linguistic behaviour between the “Sorbian core region” and the “German-dominated region”.

³ Cfr. BREU (2000a: 51–54) for an overview of the current linguistic and extra-linguistic situation in the Sorbian core region and SCHOLZE (2008) for a detailed description of the sociolinguistic status of CUS and of the overall German influence on the grammar and vocabulary of this variety. CUS developed only after World War II, due to the introduction of Sorbian schooling in the Catholic area, with dialect speakers being taught SUS.

tion and strongly influenced by the work of grammarians and purists (FASKA 1998). Two corner stones are decisive for the more recent developments, slavization and degermanization (LÖRZSCH 1998). SUS has the most complex aspect system of all modern varieties of Sorbian.

2.1.1. *The derivational verbal aspect (stem-alternating opposition of perfectivity)*

Like in the other Slavic languages, the opposition of perfectivity is expressed in SUS in all tenses and moods by means of stem alternations with suffixes as in (1a), prefixes (1b) or suffix alternation (1c), sometimes accompanied by changes in the verbal root.⁴ There are also some cases of suppletion (1d). These formal means, normally belonging to the realm of word formation, are functionally fully equivalent to other means of expression for aspect categories like inflection and periphrases in other languages. That's why we call this morphological type "grammatical derivation",⁵ with aspectually complete verb lexemes normally consisting of pairs of an imperfective (ipf) and a perfective (pf) verb with the same lexical meaning:

- (1) a. SUFFIXATION [pf > ipf]: *dać/dawać* 'to give', *darić/darować* 'to give as a present', *wrócić/wrócić* 'to return', *wubrać/wuběrać* 'to choose'
 b. PREFIXATION [ipf > pf]:⁶ *pisać/napisać* 'to write', *strowić/postrowić* 'to greet', *prašec so/woprašec so* 'to ask', *mrěć/wumrěć – zemrěć* 'to die'⁷
 c. SUFFIX ALTERNATION [ipf (w)a : pf ny, i]: *čěkać/čeknyć* 'to flee', *padać/padnyć* 'to fall', *stawać/stanyć* 'to get up', *skakać/skočić* 'to jump'
 d. SUPPLETION [ipf/pf]: *brać/wzać* 'to take', *klasć/položiť* 'to lay, put'.

⁴ See BREU (2000b: 23–31) for a short overview of Slavic aspect morphology in general. The description of SUS aspect morphology in the following is restricted to its basic characteristics; see FASSKE (1981: 184–196) and SCHUSTER-ŠEWIC (1984: 175–187) for more details. For multiple affixations, not discussed at all in this paper, see WERNER (2003). Due to restrictions of space, we will avoid any discussion of aspect theories in this paper, the more so as, in our opinion, the theory of the "Interaction of the Lexicon with verbal Aspect" (ILA; see chapter 3.1.), adopted here, allows for a thorough description of the characteristics of aspect in Sorbian. It will not be possible either to go into detail with respect to the influence of adverbials and other context types on aspect usage.

⁵ For the concept of "grammatical derivation" see LEHMANN (1999, 215; 223–225).

⁶ Contrary to FASSKE (1981: 184–191) and SCHUSTER-ŠEWIC (1984: 177), classifying the pf partners in this formation type as unpaired perfectives with a modifying prefix (aktionsarten), pairs formed by prefixation are claimed in this paper to be functionally equivalent to those formed by suffixation as long as the two partner verbs do not differ in lexical meaning. Sorbian dictionaries like JENČ (1986), but also for example TOOPS (2001b: 130), likewise treat prefixed perfectives as partners in aspectual pairs. Whenever prefixation in addition to making the verb perfective causes an independent new meaning, an ipf partner is formed by means of (secondary) imperfectivization, thus giving rise to a new lexeme (aspectual pair), e.g. *pisać* 'write (ipf)' → *podpisać/podpisować* 'to sign (pf/ipf)'.

⁷ Both in the suffix and the prefix type there are aspectual triples, with either two pf verbs, as in this case *wumrěć – zemrěć*, or two ipf verbs with the competing suffixes *-a/e- : -owa-* as in *zawalić/ zawaleć – zawalować* 'to wrap'. The suffix *-owa-* seems to be preferred in iterative readings, at least in some triples and for some speakers (TOOPS 1998: 525). According to the normative rules (FASSKE 1981: 192), however, such imperfectives are synonymous – with a preference for one of the two suffixes in the individual triples. Triples occur in the realm of suppletion, too, e.g. *popadnyć/popadować – lójić* 'to catch'. In some cases, even aspectual quadruples exist, as in the case of the triple *mrěć/wumrěć – zemrěć* 'to die' with an additional ipf *wuměrać* in bookish style. Nevertheless, aspectual pairs are by far the most frequent way of expressing the derivational aspect opposition.

Apart from the regular aspectual pairs, there are also biaspectual i/pf verbs, used both in ipf and pf contexts. In addition to some inherited Slavic verbs like *prajić* ‘say (i/pf)’ or *minýc so* ‘pass (i/pf)’, many biaspectual verbs characterized by the suffix *-owa*-⁸ have been calqued or borrowed from German, like for example *přenocować* ‘stay the night’ (German *übernachten*), *wuskutkować* ‘cause’ (German *bewirken*), or *organizować* ‘organize’ (German *organisieren*).

Due to the incompatibility of their lexical meanings with the pf aspect, many SUS ipf verbs are unpaired (*imperfectiva tantum*), thus forming lexemes of their own without a pf partner. On the other hand, quite a few perfectives lack an ipf partner (*perfectiva tantum*), too, or avoid it because of its bookish character. In this case loan constructions with local adverbs often appear as ipf “partners”,⁹ e.g.

- (2) *wuńc/won hić* ‘exit (pf/ipf)’, literally: “out go” (bookish ipf *wuchadžeć*)
zalězc/nutř lězc ‘creep into (pf/ipf)’, literally “into creep”

2.1.2. The inflectional aspect opposition and its interaction with tense

The following description of the normative SUS tense system with special consideration of inflectional aspect is mainly based on FASSKE (1981). Apart from the present, synthetic tense forms exist only for the imperfect and aorist, see Table 1:

	IMPERFECT = IMPERFECTIVE PAST			AORIST = PERFECTIVE PAST		
	SINGULAR	PLURAL	DUAL ¹⁰	SINGULAR	PLURAL	DUAL
1PERS	<i>třělach</i>	<i>třělachmy</i>	<i>třělachmoj</i>	<i>třělich</i>	<i>třělichmy</i>	<i>třělichmoj</i>
2PERS	<i>třěleše</i>	<i>třělešće</i>	<i>třěleštaj/-tej</i>	<i>třěli</i>	<i>třělišće</i>	<i>třělištaj/-tej</i>
3PERS	<i>třěleše</i>	<i>třělachu</i>	<i>třěleštaj/-tej</i>	<i>třěli</i>	<i>třělichu</i>	<i>třělištaj/-tej</i>
1PERS	<i>pijach</i>	<i>pijachmy</i>	<i>pijachmoj</i>	<i>wupich</i>	<i>wupichmy</i>	<i>wupichmoj</i>
2PERS	<i>piješe</i>	<i>piješće</i>	<i>piještaj/-tej</i>	<i>wupi</i>	<i>wupišće</i>	<i>wupištaj/-tej</i>
3PERS	<i>piješe</i>	<i>pijachu</i>	<i>piještaj/-tej</i>	<i>wupi</i>	<i>wupichu</i>	<i>wupištaj/-tej</i>

Table 1: Synthetic past tense forms for *třěleć/třělič* ‘to shoot’, *pic/wupic* ‘to drink (up)’

FASSKE (1981) avoids the traditional terms “imperfect” and “aorist”, by claiming that there is only one (aspectually differentiated) simple past, contrary to, for example, SCHUSTER-ŠEWIC (1984) and older grammars like MUCKE (1891). The traditional terminology is preferable when comparing the Sorbian systems with the South Slavic languages, and there are formal differences between the two paradigms in SUS clearly reflecting the old opposition, especially in the 2nd and 3rd person singular with the ipf and pf simple past differing in the ending. Moreover, with the exception of the *a*-conjugation, all forms differ in stem-final vowels, which – from a synchronic point of view – could be assigned to the endings, too.

⁸ As shown by *darować* (1a) the same suffix is also used to derive ipf verbs from pf ones.

⁹ They are, however, classified as colloquial by SUS grammarians (SCHUSTER-ŠEWIC 1984: 176). See TOOPS (2001a) for a comparison of the SUS ipf periphrastic forms with similar constructions in Latvian (and Czech).

¹⁰ In the 2./3. person dual of SUS, there is a grammatical opposition between the forms referring to male persons as subjects (*-taj*) and all the other subjects (*-tej*).

On the other hand, Sorbian imperfect and aorist forms, indeed, differ from the South Slavic languages with such a formal opposition in not being independent from the stem-alternating aspect opposition of perfectivity, as the imperfect is restricted to imperfective verbs, like *třećeć*, *pić* in Table 1, and the aorist to perfective ones, like *třećić*, *wupić*. In other words, there is only an ipf imperfect and a pf aorist. As a consequence, it is not possible to determine specific functions of the imperfect and the aorist. They always have the same functions as the imperfective and the perfective stems, respectively, the only information of their own being the temporal one of past tense. Given the formal differences, claiming only one synthetic past is, however, tantamount to attributing additional inflectional characteristics to the derivational opposition of perfectivity, with serious – and perhaps unnecessary – consequences for Slavic aspect typology.

The (present) perfect or “analytical *l*-past” (formed with the present of the auxiliary *być* ‘to be’ and the *l*-participle) is not restricted to the typical functions of a perfect focusing resulting states, as in (3) “x is removed” or “x is a trafficker”, or the experiential function as in (4), but is also a substitute for the simple past, as exemplified in (5) with the variation of the pf perfect *je wumrěl* with the aorist *wumrě* and of the ipf perfect (*je*) *stala* with the imperfect *steješe*.¹¹

- (3) *Krajneho radu su wotsadźili, pječa je wón suwał.*
 district.ADJ.ACC.SG administrator.ACC.SG AUX.PRS.3PL
 remove.PFV.PTCP.PL apparently AUX.PRS.3SG he traffic.PFV.PTCP.M
 ‘The district administrator **has been removed**, apparently he **has trafficked**.’
- (4) *Tam bě najrjeńši křižny chód, kotryž sym hdy wuhladał.*
 there AUX.IMPF.3SG beautiful.SUPERL.NOM CROSS.ADJ.NOM.SG
 walkway.NOM.SG which.ACC AUX.PRS.1SG when
 catch:sight.PFV.PTCP.M
 ‘There was the most beautiful cloister I **have** ever **caught sight** of.’
- (5) ... *hdyž je jemu nan wumrěť (~ wumrě.AOR.3SG) a mać cyle bjez zastaranja stala. (~ steješe.IMPF.3SG)*
 when AUX.PRS.3SG him father.NOM.SG die.PFV.PTCP.M and
 mother.NOM.SG wholly without maintenance.GEN.SG
 stand.IPFV.PTCP.F
 ‘... when his father **died** and his mother **was** without any maintenance.’

The analytical *l*-past also functions as a future perfect, contrary to most other Slavic languages, for example Russian, using in this case the (perfective) present:

- (6) *Hdyž budže dźěćo tu, sće na wšo*
 when.REL be.FUT.3SG child.NOM.SG here AUX.PRS.2PL on all

¹¹ Most SUS examples in this paper have been taken from literary works, but are given, as a rule, in abridged form, with omissions, or slightly adapted. Glossing of non-verb forms will be restricted to the necessary minimum.

zabyła.

forget.PFV.PTCP.F

‘When the child will be here, you **(will) have forgotten** it all.’

SUS has a past perfect, formed with the imperfect of *być* and the *l*-participle of verbs of both aspects, for example *běch třělil* ‘I had shot (pf)’, *bě(še) třělal* ‘s/he had shot (ipf)’. It can be replaced by the (present) perfect, i.e. the *l*-past, too:

- (7) *Přecelow* *bě* *zetkał* (~ *je*.AUX.PRS.3SG *zetkał*),
 friend.ACC.PL AUX.IMPF.3SG meet.PFV.PTCP.M
hdyž *so* *do* *města* *wrócachu*.
 when.REL REFL to town.GEN.SG return.IMPE.3PL
 ‘He **had met** his friends, when they were returning to the town.’

The given SUS tense grammemes have exact equivalents in Standard German, including the stylistically conditioned variation between the synthetic and the analytic past outside the typical perfect functions. There are, however, some additional verb forms missing in German, with special actional meanings besides their temporal functions. One of them is the iterative past, homonymous with the conditional, i.e. formed with the *l*-participle and the conditional verb *by-* ‘would’:¹²

- (8) *Pokoještaj* *ju*, *ale* *bórze* *by* *znowa* *cychnowała*.
 comfort.IMPF.3DU her but soon COND.3SG again go:wild.IPFV.PTCP.F
 ‘They comforted her, but she **would** soon **go wild** again.’

Incidentally, not only in the simple past, but also with respect to the future, SUS tense forms depend on the derivational aspect category, in this case like in Russian, with ipf verbs forming a periphrastic future with the future of the auxiliary *być* ‘to be’ and the pf verbs using the present to express the future, e.g. *budu třelec* ‘I will shoot (ipf)’ : *třělu* ‘I will shoot (pf)’. But contrary to Russian, there are also special synthetic future forms different from the pf present in the case of the unidirectional verbs of motion of the type *hić* ‘to walk’, e.g. *du* ‘I walk’ : *pónđu* ‘I will walk’,¹³ and also for *měć* ‘to have’, e.g. *mam* ‘I have’ : *změju* ‘I will have’.

The exclusion of pf verbs from the analytic future is, however, a purist claim, not consistently respected by all writers, as the following example shows:¹⁴

¹² Another special case is the “execution form” (*Vollzugsform*, FASSKE 1981: 228–232), normally restricted to pf verbs, referring to a state as the result of a prior action, but excluding explicit reference to the event time. It is formed with *měć* ‘have’ and the passive participle (i.e. like the present perfect in English or German), e.g. *mam suknju zašitu* ‘I **have sewed up** the skirt’, where adding *wčera* ‘yesterday’ would be impossible, contrary to the *l*-perfect. The agent of the implied action is not necessarily identical with the subject. There is also a future, e.g. *změju napisany* ‘I will have written’, but again with exclusive reference to the resulting state, contrasting with LÖTZSCH’S (1995: 176) claim of functional equivalence to the German future perfect of the type *ich werde geschrieben haben*. Similar constructions (possessive resultatives) have developed, for example, in Polish and Czech, too; see GIGER (2003: 126–174) for Czech and (2003: 478–496) for a comparison with other Slavic languages.

¹³ *po*-forms exist also in the imperative, but neither in the past nor in the infinitive, similar to Czech and contrary to Russian with its pf verbs of the type *pojii* ‘to walk (pf)’.

¹⁴ The normative rule in question goes back to the 19th century (FASSKE 1981: 253). In FASSKE’S opinion, using the pf aspect in the analytic future is marked as stylistically low, in spite of his own examples coming from appreciated Sorbian writers. In Colloquial Upper Sorbian all pf verbs form their future analytically.

- (9) Wy **buďteće** jako wučerjo nohi pod burske blido **tyknyć**.
 you be.FUT.2PL as teachers feet under farmer.ADJ table put.PFV.INF
 ‘You as teachers **will put** your feet under the table of farmers.’

But even normative SUS allows for pf analytic forms, when the future state of affairs is topicalized by putting the infinitive in initial position (FASKE 1981: 253):

- (10) **Přinjesć** jemu **nichtó** **ničó** **njebudže**.
 bring.PFV.INF him nobody nothing not-be.FUT.3SG
 ‘Nobody will bring him anything.’

The aspect-dependent types of grammatical expression in the simple past and in the future become overt and independent aspect forms when biaspectual verbs are at issue, as in this case they alone disambiguate the otherwise homonymous aspect opposition. Thus we get clearly different forms in the case of *prajić* ‘say (i/pf)’, for example in the 2nd and 3rd person of the past, with *praješe* ‘said (imperfect)’ and *praji* (aorist), as well as in the future *budu prajić* ‘I will say’ (ipf) and *praju* (pf) and so on. The same is true for many biaspectual verbs with the suffix *-owa-* like *přenocować* ‘stay the night’ with past forms like *přenocowaše* (imperfect) : *přenocowa* (aorist) and the futures *budu přenocować* (ipf) : *přenocuju* (pf).¹⁵

2.2. The reduced formal systems of Lower and Colloquial Upper Sorbian

The means of expressing the derivational aspect of SLS are very similar to those of SUS, e.g. suffixation: *kupiš/kupowaš* ‘to buy (pf/ipf)’, *wubraš/wuběraš* ‘to choose (pf/ipf)’, prefixation:¹⁶ *slaš/póslaš* ‘to send (ipf/pf)’, suffix alternation: *padnuš/padaš* ‘to fall (pf/ipf)’ and suppletion: *braš/wzeš* ‘to take (ipf/pf)’.

As for the inflectional opposition in the simple past, things are, however, different. Although the normative grammar of JANAŠ (1984²: 325–327) gives full paradigms for imperfect and aorist, these forms seem to be restricted to a bookish, historicizing style, appearing in the modern language only due to the influence of Upper Sorbian¹⁷ and German. Lower Sorbian dialects have not known such forms for a long time.¹⁸ Here is an example for the simple past in its literary use:

¹⁵ The gerund is aspect-sensitive, too, as “present” gerunds, expressing simultaneity, can only be formed of ipf verbs and “past” gerunds, expressing sequence, from pf ones, thus only *pisajo* ‘writing (ipf)’ and *napisawši* ‘having written (pf)’, again with both forms in the case of biaspectuals like *prajo* ‘saying (ipf)’: *prajiwši* ‘having said (pf)’.

¹⁶ SLS grammars tend to negate the purely grammatical function of prefixes as well; see for example JANAŠ (1984²: 292–304), who does not even mention the possibility of forming aspectual pairs by means of prefixes, while not denying, of course, their perfectivizing function as such (with a change in lexical meaning). But in dictionaries, the partners in aspectual pairs like *slaš/póslaš* ‘to send (ipf/pf)’ normally appear with an identical lexical meaning, just like in SUS.

¹⁷ MARTI (2007) and FASKA (1998) give an overview of the linguistic and extralinguistic position of Lower Sorbian within Sorbian as a whole. For the lack of a genuine synthetic past in Standard Lower Sorbian see LÖTZSCH (1995: 172) and FASKA (1998: 225).

¹⁸ For this reason and in spite of the paradigms given earlier in his grammar, even JANAŠ (1984²) advises against the use of the simple past (and the past perfect). Already ŠČERBA (1915) does not mention

- (11) Pótom wóna wuchaca **wugna.**
 then she hare.ACC.SG chase.AOR.3SG
 Wuchac **žěšo**¹⁹ a **plakašo.**
 hare.NOM.SG go.IMPE.3SG and cry.IMPE.3SG
 ‘Then it (the fox) chased away the hare. The hare went away crying.’

In Colloquial Upper Sorbian we find an intermediate state with the simple past reduced to modal and auxiliary verbs like *móžeše* ‘s/he could’ or *bě(še)* ‘s/he was’ and additionally a few full verbs like *praješe* ‘said’ or *šindžeše* ‘came’, with the traditional imperfect ending *-še* of the 2nd and 3rd person for both aspects.²⁰ This situation corresponds to a reduction even with respect to the Catholic dialects CUS is based on.²¹ As Lower Sorbian influence on CUS is excluded, the past tense characteristics of this variety can be attributed to the influence of modern German varieties, showing similar restrictions. On the other hand, we could claim German influence to be the overall reason for conserving the simple past in SUS, too (BREU 2005: 38–41). In this case the donor language would have been literary Standard German, however, whose influence was much greater in SUS than in Lower Sorbian, which lost its simple past by following a general Slavic diachronic constant, like Polish, Czech and the other North Slavic languages.

As for the derivational aspect opposition, CUS uses, in principle, the same forms as the two standard languages. Although it has a greater number of biaspectual verbs in the traditional vocabulary than SUS, for instance *zakazać* ‘to forbid’, *naličić* ‘to list’, *šinć* ‘to come’, the formation of aspectual pairs is very productive in this variety, even in recent loan verbs like *fönwać/sfönwać* ‘to blow-dry (ipf/pf)’, *kipwać/kipnć* ‘to tip, tilt (ipf/pf)’; see SCHOLZE (2008: 230–231). The periphrastic constructions of the type *won hić* ‘go out’, imperfective in SUS (if accepted at all by the grammarians) are biaspectual in CUS.

such forms at all in his description of the Muskau East (Lower) Sorbian dialect. Interestingly enough, he attributes the past *čagaxu* ‘marched’ (3rd plural imperfect), turning up in one of his texts (Appendix, p. 22) and completely incomprehensible to all speakers, to the storyteller’s knowledge of the literary language. See also MICHALK (1959a) for a thorough description of the use of the simple past in the Lower and Upper Sorbian varieties, from the historical and the modern (of his time) point of view. He calls the simple past of Lower Sorbian an archaism already with respect to the 17th century, having been revitalized and even extended due to Upper Sorbian and German literary influence from the 18th century onwards.

¹⁹ As in Upper Sorbian, unidirectional verbs of motion like SLS *hys* (SUS *hić*) are defined as unpaired imperfectives, which corresponds to their having only imperfect endings in the 2nd and 3rd person singular of the simple past, e.g. *žěšo* (SLS) and *džěše* (SUS). This does, however, not coincide with their functions, as results from the example given here, where a change of situation (sequence of events) is at issue, normally requiring a pf verb. Therefore, these verbs should be regarded as biaspectual with respect to the derivational aspect opposition, in spite of the absence of aorist forms.

²⁰ See SCHOLZE (2008: 213f.) for such residuals in CUS and WERNER (1996: 126) for the occurrence of wrong endings of the pf simple past (aorist) even in school essays, obviously influenced by the CUS native tongue of the pupils.

²¹ Cf. FASSKE (1975: 100–103), where the greater part of the dialects in the CUS area still show one third of simple-past forms, not replaced by the analytical *l*-past (perfect), and MICHALK (1959a) for more details with respect to the “Northern” Upper Sorbian dialects altogether, to which the Catholic dialects are traditionally assigned.

3. Aspect functions in the Sorbian varieties from a typological point of view

3.1. The ILA aspect model

Before entering the discussion of the functional characteristics of the derivational aspect opposition, I will briefly introduce the ILA model of the “Interaction of the Lexicon with verbal Aspect”,²² allowing for a typological classification of aspect systems. Due to restrictions of space, only part of the theory will be presented here, and specific linguistic examples will be postponed to the next sections. In this model, verb lexemes – or rather their meanings – are grouped into actional lexeme classes (= ILA classes) according to their aspect-sensitive properties.

States of affairs in the real world ideally have a boundary B1 as their starting point and a boundary B2 as their end. The time period between B1 and B2 is their “virulent phase”, preceded by a pre-initial phase, in which the state of affairs in question is being prepared, and a post-final phase, showing its consequences. States of affairs are conceptualized by the speakers of a language by means of verbal lexemes in a class-specific way according to the type of boundary characteristics of their virulent phase. Boundary characteristics depend on the probability with which a given state of affairs, after having entered its virulent phase, comes to an end by reaching its final boundary B2. This probability is equivalent to its “degree of temporal dynamics”. In Figure 1, the degrees of the simple ILA classes are given in scalar form (0–3). In order to simplify the explication, I will represent abstract semantic concepts in the form of English verbs in braces to be determined language specifically in the examples following below:

temporal dynamics			
0	--- TSTA	totally static	{weigh, consist of}
1	----- RSTA	relatively static	{belong to, believe}
2	----- ACTI	temporary (<i>activities</i>)	{work, sit}
3	↓----- TTER	totally terminative	{find, explode}

Figure 1: Temporal dynamics of the simple ILA classes

In the terminative TTER class, showing the highest degree of temporal dynamics 3, reaching the final boundary B2 of the given state of affairs is obligatory as soon as it has begun, without any possibility of interrupting it. In all other classes, there are different temporal probabilities for reaching B2. Whereas in the totally static TSTA class, referring to inalienable properties, temporal dynamics is tantamount to zero, relatively static states of affairs (RSTA) correspond to alienable properties and relations, whose end (disappearance) is facultative (degree 1). In both static classes the virulent phase can possibly last for an unlimited period of time, contrary to the temporary states of affairs of the ACTI class (degree 2), being bound to end, as their virulent phase depends on agent control or other temporary conditions.

²² See BREU (1994) for an earlier version of the ILA model, with less classes (and a slightly different terminology with respect to aspect functions), and BREU (1996) and (2005) for an overview of the more recent “component” version. The ILA term “interaction” refers to the interaction of lexical and grammatical meaning in verb forms. It has nothing to do with other uses of the term “interaction” as in “discourse interaction” and the like.

The elementary boundary characteristics of the simple ILA classes in Figure 1 can appear as components of complex classes, too. For instance, the hybrid GTER class of gradually terminative verb meanings in (12), with B2 as an action-inherent goal, which is optionally attained by a gradual process, combines the characteristics of the elementary classes ACTI and TTER and implies for the post-phase a result with RSTA properties:

(12) **GTER** = “ACTI + TTER” \supset result (RSTA) {arrive, build sth., open}

Certain static verb lexemes show not only a temporal but also an event-inherent limitation, referring to the beginning of their virulent phase, a point of time in which B1 and B2 coincide. The meaning of such verbs typically consists of the components TTER and RSTA, corresponding to the starting point and the “resulting” state respectively. They are inceptively static (ISTA):

(13) **ISTA** = “TTER + RSTA” {understand, know}

The actional meanings of the most complex inchoative class (INCO) combine even three components by adding the causation of the state, which happened during their virulent phase, to the ISTA-typical reference to a state and its beginning:

(14) **INCO** = “ACTI + TTER + RSTA” {cover, hide, surround}

It must be kept in mind that the classification of verbs according to the criterion of temporal dynamics is a classification of verb meanings, i.e. verbs with more than one reading (meaning) can belong to more than one class.²³

The functions of aspect grammemes can be classified according to their boundary characteristics, i.e. according to their degree of temporal dynamics, too:



Figure 2: Aspect grammemes and the temporal dynamics of their functions

The pf aspect grammeme of the Sorbian Standard languages is in functional respects a Limitative, expressing the total realization of the state of affairs of a given verb lexeme with its boundaries and eventual results. It refers immediately and exclusively to a change of the given situation and has therefore the highest degree of temporal dynamics. The ipf aspect grammeme, on the other hand, comprises three aspect functions with different degrees of temporal dynamics, presenting verbal states of affairs either as inalienable

²³ Our classification of **verb meanings** on the basis of the degree of their temporal dynamics differs from VENDLER'S (1957) types of time schemata, which are derived from the syntactic behaviour of **verbs**. Nevertheless, there is a certain relationship between VENDLER'S “activity terms”, “accomplishment terms” and “achievement terms” with our ACTI, TTER and GTER class respectively. On the other hand, his “state terms” have three ILA equivalents, TSTA, RSTA and ISTA, and our INCO class has no VENDLER equivalent at all. Moreover, lexical-grammatical interactions are outside VENDLER'S approach.

properties (Universe), secondary states, i.e. habitual events (Stative), or temporary processes (Processive).²⁴

The invariant of the dimension of aspect, i.e. of all the single aspect functions, is the manipulation of the lexical (actional) degree of temporal dynamics by adapting it to the degree of temporal dynamics of the aspect function in question. This means that aspect functions are operators applied to lexical meanings as operands, the result of this procedure being interaction meanings (ILA-meanings) typical for the given lexical ILA class with the aspect function in question. The Limitative, for example, obligatorily refers to B2 as having been reached together with the realization of possible results of the verb meaning in its post-final phase. For GTER lexemes this is equivalent to a resultative ILA-meaning. In the case of TTER lexemes, in which the realization of B2 is present already at the lexical level, we get an “empty” application of the Limitative.

The “aspectual manipulation of lexical meanings” by means of verbal aspect can be subdivided into two essentially different procedures, the focusing of a component of a given lexeme (= focus aspect) and the modification of the actional “status” of the lexeme by a real change of its dynamics degree (= status aspect).²⁵

The aspectual focus procedure does not actually change the boundary characteristics of the lexeme. It only selects the actional component with the corresponding degree of temporal dynamics and puts it to the foreground with the other component(s) remaining in the background. This procedure is, of course, restricted to the complex classes. The Limitative with its degree 3 thus focuses the TTER component (degree 3) of the complex boundary characteristics of the GTER, ISTA and INCO group, whereas the Processive with the degree 2 focuses the ACTI component (degree 2) of the GTER and INCO group, with the inherent goal of the state of affairs, i.e. the TTER component, remaining present. As the ISTA group lacks an ACTI component, it is incompatible with the Processive but combines freely with the Stative and the Limitative due to its components RSTA and TTER with corresponding degrees of temporal dynamics.

3.2. Aspect functions and ILA meanings in Standard Upper Sorbian

Just like in Russian and the other Slavic standard languages including SLS, the procedure of focusing an actional component belongs to the characteristics of verbal aspect in SUS. In GTER lexemes like *předač/předawać* ‘sell (pf/ipf)’, the pf aspect of *předač* with its Limitative function therefore refers to a completely carried out action of selling, including the result of the object having passed from one proprietor to another, whereas the ipf aspect, having the Processive as one of its functions, focuses the ACTI component of *předawać*, with the ILA meaning of a terminative process, i.e. a process leading towards the goal B2 in which the proprietor of the object changes.

A typical case of the Processive focus is the actual present in answers to questions of the type “What is s/he doing” with terminative verbs, e.g. *předawa runje knihu* ‘s/he is just

²⁴ In other languages, the distribution of aspectual functions on aspect grammemes can be different. In English, for example, the Processive is assigned separately to a grammeme, the progressive, while all the other aspect functions are expressed by the simple form. – We use capital initial letters to differentiate aspect functions like “Processive” from grammemes like “imperfective”.

²⁵ See SONNENHAUSER (2008: 2093–2096) for an integration of the focus-status dichotomy into other concepts of aspectual behaviour.

selling a book'. The operation in question with the Processive as operator, the actional GTER meaning as operand, and the focus on the ACTI component as the ILA meaning (reading) could be formalized as follows:²⁶

$$(15) \text{ Processive}_2 \odot \text{GTER} \rightarrow \underline{\text{ACTI}_2} + \text{TTER}_3$$

(16) and (17) are simple-past examples for the Processive and the Limitative focus operation in direct opposition. Such cases show very well the specific character of the ILA meanings in question, with the terminative process moving towards the meaning-inherent goal and the total resultative action reaching it. After the translations, the corresponding formalizations have been added:

(16) *Hudžba přestawaše hrač a skónčnje přesta.*
 music stop.IMPF.3SG play.IPFV.INF and finally stop.AOR.3SG
 'The music was **stopping** playing (= was being stopped) and finally **stopped**.'
 (Processive₂ ⊙ GTER → ACTI₂ + TTER₃) – (Limitative₃ ⊙ GTER → ACTI₂ + TTER₃)

(17) *Jan wróćeše so z korčmy domoj, hdyž
 Jan return.IMPF.3SG REFL from pub.GEN.SG home, when
 zetka přecela. Potajkim wróći so hakle pozdže.
 meet.AOR.3SG friend.ACC therefore return.AOR.3SG REFL only late*
 'Jan **was returning** home from the pub, when he met a friend. Therefore he **returned** only late.'
 (Processive₂ ⊙ GTER → ACTI₂ + TTER₃) – (Limitative₃ ⊙ GTER → ACTI₂ + TTER₃)

Although it has the same grammatical characteristics as *wróći*, i.e. 3rd person singular (pf) aorist, the intervening TTER verb *zetka* 'met' in (17) is not the result of a focus operation but simply refers to a total event.²⁷ In both cases the Limitative function of the pf aspect causes a change of the given situation, resulting in the case of *zetka* in a taxis correlation of "incidence" (background : event) with respect to the preceding ipf verb. On the other hand, the following pf verb form *wróći so* causes the taxis correlation of a "sequence" (of events) with *zetka*. This means that the capacity of differentiating incidence from sequence by means of the verbal aspect, exists in SUS, just like in many other aspect languages with a Processive focus. We will see below that CUS is very different in this respect.

In ISTA lexemes like *rozumić/zrozumić* 'understand (ipf/pf)',²⁸ the Limitative function (degree 3) of the pf verb once again refers to the complete realization of the state of affairs with its boundaries by focusing the TTER component, which in this case with B1 and B2 coinciding in the initial point is tantamount to the beginning of the RSTA state of understanding, i.e. coming to understand, as in (18). As for the ipf verb, a Processive function is

²⁶ The symbol ⊙ refers to focus aspect, whereas × is the symbol for status aspect. The small numbers refer to the degree of temporal dynamics of the lexical meanings and the aspect functions. The focused component is underlined (BREU 2005: 50–56).

²⁷ This is a case of the empty application of the Limitative as a status changing operation, presenting the verb meaning in its totality without any reference to eventual components.

²⁸ Contrary to the suffixing type of *ponjat'/ponimat'* 'understand (pf/ipf)' in Russian, the SUS lexeme belongs to the prefixing type. As the aspectual pairs of both languages belong to the ISTA class with a parallel aspect behaviour, this formal difference is a clear hint at the fortuitousness of the way of expressing the aspectual opposition in Slavic verb lexemes. In Russian prefixing ISTA pairs also exist, e.g. *videt'/uvidet'* 'see (ipf/pf)'.

excluded, due to the lack of an ACTI component in the lexical meaning of the ISTA class, whereas its Stative function (degree 1), causes the ILA meaning of (the state of) understanding by focusing the RSTA component, see (19):²⁹

- (18) *Naraz Hagen zrozumi, čehodla so spjećuje.*
 suddenly Hagen understand.AOR.3SG why REFL refuse.IPFV.PRS.3SG
 ‘Suddenly Hagen **understood** why he was refusing.’
 (Limitative₃ ⊙ ISTA → TTER₃ + RSTA₁)
- (19) *Jonas to rozumješe.*
 Jonas it understand.IMPF.3SG
 ‘Jonas **understood** it.’
 (Stative₁ ⊙ ISTA → TTER₃ + RSTA₁)

In INCO lexemes like *chować/schować* ‘to hide (transitive, ipf/pf)’, *chować so/schować so* ‘to hide (intransitive, ipf/pf)’, with the three components ACTI, TTER, and RSTA, the Limitative focus of pf verb refers to the total realization of the lexically given state of affairs, too, see (20). But the ipf verb with its greater number of aspect functions has two possible ILA meanings here, the terminative process of “putting sth. into a hideout” or “running into a hideout”, due to the Processive focus on the ACTI component (21), and the post-phase state of “keeping sth. / staying in a hideout”, going back to the Stative focus on the RSTA component (22):³⁰

- (20) *Schowa swoju hłowu do klina.*
 hide.AOR.3SG POSS.REFL.ACC.SG.F head.ACC.SG in lap.GEN.SG
 mačerje
 mother.GEN.SG
 ‘She **hid** her head in her mother’s lap.’
 (Limitative₃ ⊙ INCO → ACTI₂ + TTER₃ + RSTA₁)
- (21) *Stónco poča so runje za hory*
 sun.NOM.SG begin.AOR.3SG REFL just behind mountain.ACC.PL
chować.
 hide.IPFV.INF
 ‘The sun just began to **hide** behind the mountain.’
 (Processive₂ ⊙ INCO → ACTI₂ + TTER₃ + RSTA₁)
- (22) *Lula chowaše w kapje blešu čisteho.*
 Lula hide.IMPF.3SG. in jacket.LOC.SG bottle.ACC.SG clear.GEN.SG.M
 ‘Lula **hid/was hiding** a bottle of schnaps in her jacket.’³¹
 (Stative₁ ⊙ INCO → ACTI₂ + TTER₃ + RSTA₁)

²⁹ As in English the Stative and the Limitative are expressed by the same aspect grammeme (simple form), the SUS aspect forms are translated ambiguously in (18) und (19) by ‘understood’.

³⁰ It is typical for this class that the post-phase state can synonymously be expressed by the ipf verb in its static reading and the past of the pf verb in its resultative reading, e.g. *chowa = je schowal* ‘is hiding (it)’ = ‘has hidden (it)’. A past perfect example, whose post-phase state could synonymously be expressed with the imperfect, is: *Lawka z cuzymi bě so za lěsom schowala (~ chowaše)* ‘The bench with the foreigners **had hidden** (~ hid) behind the forest’.

³¹ As the resulting state expressed by *chowaše* can be persistent or temporary, two translations are possible in English, differing in the aspectual form of the verb.

The examples given so far, in which the aspect usage of SUS is, in principle, parallel to that of the other Slavic languages, refer to unique states of affairs with the default use of the tense forms. There are, however, some important differences, at least with respect to Russian, first of all, in the case of explicit iteration. Just like Czech and unlike Russian,³² SUS uses pf verbs for repeated terminative states of affairs, even though mostly as variants of ipf verbs:³³

- (23) *Jeje listy přeco w pisanskim blidže schowa.*
 her letter.ACC.PL always in writing.LOC.SG.N table.LOC.SG hide.AOR.3SG
 ‘Her letters he **always hid** in the desk.’³⁴

The historic present allows for the pf aspect, too, again contrary to Russian, with an overall distribution of the aspects similar to the past tense:³⁵

- (24) *Spody mje koši so porik. Potom mje*
 below me kiss. IPFV.PRS.3SG REFL couple then me
preprosytaj k wječeri z tomatami a
 invite.PFV.PRS.3DU to dinner.DAT.SG with tomatoe.INS.PL and
wódku a zhonju, zo je muž namórník, kiž
 vodka.INS.SG and learn.PFV.PRS.1SG that is man sailor PART.REL
wróca so z jězby wokoło zemje.
 return.IPFV.PRS.3SG REFL from trip.GEN.SG around earth.GEN.SG
 ‘Below me a couple **is kissing**. Later they **invite** me for dinner with tomatoes and vodka and I **learn** that the man/husband is a sailor, who **is returning** from a trip around the world.’

A special case is the present referring to the recent past, which, just like the historical present, can be attributed to the transposed usage. Here again the pf present is normal in SUS, contrary to Russian:

- (25) *To je rjenje, zo was tu zetkam.*
 it is beautiful that you here meet.PFV.PRS.1SG
 ‘It’s fine **meeting** you here.’

³² Actually, pf aspect is not excluded completed from explicit iteration in Russian either, as it can be used as a variant of the ipf aspect in the case of limited repetitions (summarizing functions) of the type *skazal tri raza* ‘said three times’. But contrary to Russian, SUS allows for pf aspect also with adverbs of unrestricted frequency like *husto* ‘often’, *přeco* ‘always’, *zřídka* ‘rarely’ etc.

³³ FASSKE (1981: 183) does not differentiate between habitual states of affairs and explicit iteration expressed by adverbials. It seems, however, that except for unpaired perfectives (aktionsarten), pf aspect appears mainly in the second case; see TOOPS (2001b: 147) for a correlation between the absence of adverbials and the use of the ipf aspect in his questionnaire. Other criteria, influencing the aspect choice in iterative contexts are: potential lexical differences between opposing aspectual forms, ambiguity of temporal adverbials, temporal ambiguity of biaspectual verbs, stylistic markedness of one member of an aspectual pair, correlations between aspectuality and grammatical aspect, and preference for non-stem-suffixed forms of *verba dicendi* and other performatives (Toops 2001b: 129).

³⁴ As *chowac/schować* means not only ‘hide’ but also ‘conserve’, example (22) is ambiguous in this respect.

³⁵ See BREU (2000b: 42–50) for a cross-Slavic comparison and a model of hierarchically ordered micro and macro levels for the explanation of the different behaviour of the individual Slavic languages with respect to iteration, the historic present, and so on.

We now have to deal with the aspectual status operations, which – contrary to the focus operations – really change the degree of temporal dynamics of the lexemes of both the simple and the complex classes. As a status-changing operation, the Unversive downgrades more dynamic meanings to secondary TSTA properties with the ILA meanings of inalienable properties (degree 0), e.g. in *ptački lětaja* ‘birds fly’ from the downgraded ACTI verb *lětać* ‘fly’. A formal representation for this operation would be: $\text{Unversive}_0 \times \text{ACTI} \rightarrow \text{“TSTA}_0\text{”}$ (with the quotation marks symbolizing the secondary character of the property). An analogous procedure leading to secondary RSTA₁ states with the ILA meaning of habituality, is the Stative status operation, changing all lexical meanings to the dynamics degree 1, as in the case of the following three verbs in the 3rd person singular imperfect:

- (26) *W swojej komorce wuknješe, čitaše a*
 in POSS.REFL.LOC.SG.F room.LOC.SG learn.IMPF.3SG read.IMPF and
pisaše.
 write.IMPF.3SG
 ‘In her room she used to **learn, read, and write.**’

The Processive status operation modifies terminative meanings into aterminative processes (secondary activities).³⁶ They differ from terminative processes, resulting from Processive focus operations, in not having an action-specific goal as their final boundary B2. Typical examples come from the processual use of basically semelfactive meanings of the TTER class, where the resulting aterminative process consists of a continuous iteration of the state of affairs, for example in the case of the imperfect *třěleše* ‘s/he was shooting’ (several shots) in contrast to the aorist *třěli* ‘s/he shot’ (normally once). With other terminative verbs the change of status by means of the Processive can result in an abstraction from the specific goal of the state of affairs, formally reflected by partiality, plurality or absence of the object. An example for this is (27) with the two GTER lexemes *přeložować/přeložić* ‘to translate (ipf/pf)’ and *pisać/napisać* ‘to write (ipf/pf)’, in the 3rd person imperfect:

- (27) *Wona přeložowaše, mjzetym zo wón pisaše*
 she translate.IMPF.3SG while that he write.IMPF.3SG
 (listy).
 letter.ACC.PL
 ‘She **was translating**, while he **was writing** (letters).’
 (Processive₁ × GTER → “ACTI₂”)

3.3. Aspect functions and ILA meanings in Colloquial Upper Sorbian

The above-mentioned minor differences between SUS and Russian with respect to the derivational aspect opposition, like the use of the pf aspect in the historical present, in explicit iteration and partially in the analytical future, do not affect its overall conformity

³⁶ When applied to lexical meanings with an identical dynamics degree, aspectual status functions do not change it, of course. Thus ACTI lexemes appear as aterminative processes, when combined with a status Processive and RSTA lexemes remain states when combined with the Stative, in the same way as the Limitative emptyly operates on terminative lexemes.

in the realm of the aspectual focus procedure with all the other Slavic languages (or English, considering the different distribution of aspect grammemes and their functions). But in Colloquial Upper Sorbian (CUS), things are clearly different.³⁷ We can neglect ISTA lexemes, as aspectual pairs of this class are already rare in SUS and still more in CUS, but for GTER and INCO lexemes the difference becomes obvious when regarding terminative processes in opposition with completely realized states of affairs.³⁸ As stated above, such oppositions are ILA meanings of the Processive and the Limitative of the ipf and pf aspect respectively, focusing the ACTI and TTER component in SUS. In CUS these ILA meanings can, however, not be differentiated formally, as in both cases the “pf” verb must be used,³⁹ see examples (28)–(30). This means, among other things, that the “pf” [=TERM] present tense is not excluded from the actual present as in SUS, where the ipf verb would be required in the GTER example (28). The same is true for the past tense, where a sentence like (29) is ambiguous for “terminative process” and “complete realization”, and, finally, also for combinations of “pf” [=TERM] verbs with phase verbs as in (30), normally excluded in Slavic languages:

- (28) *Što wón tam čini? –*
 what he there do.ATERM.PRS.3SG
Tón šeda (“pf”) rune jenu kniju. (SUS předawa, ipf)
 he sell.TERM.PRS.3SG just ART.INDF.ACC.SG.F book.ACC.SG
 ‘What is he doing there?’ – ‘He is just **selling** a book’
- (29) *Ja sym rune tón list*
 I AUX.PRS.1SG just ART.DEF.ACC.SG.M letter.ACC.SG
šewožil (“pf”). (SUS sym přeložował, ipf ~ přeložowach.IMPF.1SG)
 translate.TERM.PTCP.M
 ‘I **was** just **translating** the letter.’ (or ‘I have just translated the letter’)
- (30) *Tón jo započat jowo začišće*
 he AUX.PRS.3SG begin.TERM.PTCP.M his impression.ACC.PL
napisac (“pf”).
 write.TERM.INF
 ‘He **began** to **write down** his impressions.’ (SUS *zapisowac*, ipf)

Thanks to its status operations, the “ipf” (=ATERM) aspect is, however, not incompatible with GTER meanings in CUS. Thus, for example, “ipf” *šedawe* appears in (31) with the ILA reading of a secondary state (habituality), just like the corresponding form *předawa* (ipf) in SUS, which, however, could also mean *was selling* as a single terminative process (contrary to CUS requiring in this case “pf” *šeda*):

³⁷ In the following, I will give only a short overview of the characteristics of the CUS aspect system. For more details see BREU (2000a: 54–73) and SCHOLZE (2008: 230–255). With respect to the following examples, it is worth noting that CUS differs from SUS in phonological and morphological forms, too, not only in aspect functions.

³⁸ For a classification of CUS lexemes into the ILA classes see SCHOLZE (2008: 238–252).

³⁹ For the sake of comparison, we will continue using the terms “pf” (=TERM) and “ipf” (=ATERM) also for CUS verbs, but only in an abstract sense, which is symbolized by quotation marks.

- (31) *Tón šedawe* (“ipf”) *knije.*
 he sell.ATERM.PRS.3SG book.ACC.PL
 ‘He **sells** books’ (i.e. “he is a bookseller”)

The status-modifying type of aspect operations is more characteristic for the CUS system than for languages with an aspectually expressed Processive focus, the more so as it is not restricted to the downgrading of activities and terminative states of affairs to properties and states, but is also relevant for aterminative processes. Just like in SUS, this is true for genuine aterminative meanings and derived ones alike, i.e. secondary processes as an ILA meaning of the Processive in a status-modifying procedure downgrading terminative lexical meanings to (secondary) activities. While *džěle* in (32) is an example of a lexically aterminative meaning (*džělač* ‘work’), the aterminative reading of *šeložwe* ‘is translating’ is an abstraction of the basic terminative meaning of the lexeme with a specific object as the goal of the action.

- (32) *Hana rune džěle* (“ipf”). *Ta stwi*
 Ann just work.ATERM.PRS.3SG she room.LOC.SG
šeložwe (“ipf”).
 translate.ATERM.PRS.3SG
 ‘Ann **is working**. She **is translating** in her room.’

The reading of a terminative process of this lexeme appears in (33). It is expressed by the “pf” partner verb *šeložić* in CUS, forming an aspect opposition with the aterminative process expressed by “ipf” *šeložwać* in (32). SUS would use the ipf partner, here *přeložuje* (3rd person singular of *přeložować*), in both cases, due to its Processive (status and focus) being inseparably associated with the ipf aspect:

- (33) *Milena rune jen list šeloži* (“pf”).
 Milena just ART.INDF.ACC.SG.M letter.ACC.SG translate.TERM.PRS.3SG
 ‘Milena **is just translating** a letter.’ (SUS *přeložuje*, ipf)

With respect to INCO lexemes the situation is similar, for example with the reading of a terminative process in (34), requiring the “pf” verb, contrary to SUS, whereas the “ipf.” verb, here *so chowe*, would (in suitable contexts) either have the ILA meaning ‘she hid’ in the habitual sense (Stative status) or it would express an aterminative process (continuous iteration), in the sense of “playing hide-and-seek” (Processive status):⁴⁰

- (34) *Ta holca so rune zade to*
 ART.DEF.NOM.SG.F girl.NOM.SG REFL just behind ART.DEF.GEN.SG.M
štóma schowe (“pf”). (SUS *so chowa*, ipf)
 tree.GEN.SG hide.TERM.PRS.3SG
 ‘The girl is just hiding behind the tree’ (= “is running there”)

To sum up, CUS differentiates aspectually between terminative and aterminative processes, but not between complete actions or events and terminative processes, as in

⁴⁰ Just like in SUS, the ipf INCO verb can, however, have a post-phase reading, too. Replacing “pf” *schowe* in (34) by the “ipf” *chowe* would therefore result in the ILA reading of “being hidden behind the tree”. In other words, in CUS the focusing procedure is excluded only for the Processive, but is possible for the Limitative and the Stative. As a consequence, CUS can differentiate aspectually between the event (“pf”) and the post-phase readings of INCO verbs (“ipf”), but not between the event as an ongoing process or as being totally realized. In SUS it is just the other way around.

both cases terminativity prevails. The contrary is true in both cases for SUS. Considering the fact that all the other functions of the ipf aspect (of the focus and status type) coincide with aterminativity, the main characteristics of CUS verbal aspect can be claimed to be “expressing the opposition of terminativity with grammatical means”, contrary to all the other Slavic languages, including SUS and SLS, with their normative opposition of perfectivity.

Due to its lack of a focus Processive, CUS cannot differentiate taxis situations when both verbs in the taxis pair are terminative; see BREU (2003: 149; 2005: 61–65). In the above example (17), for instance, CUS would use the pf perfect *jo so wrócił* not only instead of the resultative aorist but also for the “background” process ‘was returning’, thus not being able to distinguish “incidence” from “sequence” without the help of the context. On the other hand, only CUS is able to distinguish between terminative and aterminative processes or between terminative processes and their habitualization, both requiring the ipf verb in SUS.⁴¹

As a consequence, both types of aspectual oppositions are, in principle, equally efficient in terms of differentiating ILA meanings of terminative lexemes, with parallel expressions for Univerive, Stative, Limitative, and the Processive status, but with the Processive focus coinciding either with the Limitative or with the less dynamic functions. The relation between functions and grammemes of the oppositions of perfectivity and (grammatical) terminativity are summarized in Table 2:

Aspect Function	Standard	Colloquial Upper Sorbian ⁴²
Univerive status	IPFV	= ATERM
Stative status/focus	IPFV	= ATERM
Processive status	IPFV	= ATERM
Processive focus	IPFV	≠ TERM
Limitative status/focus	PFV	= TERM

Table 2: Comparison of the aspect oppositions of Standard and Colloquial Upper Sorbian

The aspect systems of Sorbian dialects seem to represent an intermediate state between the systems with a grammatical opposition of perfectivity and of terminativity. On the one hand, many of the rules proclaimed for the use of aspectual pairs in the Standard languages are violated by the dialects as well. An example is the strict exclusion of the pf aspect from processes in the present or from forming an analytic future. But on the other hand, the aspectual differentiation between terminative processes and total realizations seems to be respected in many cases; see MICHALK (1959b) and ŠČERBA (1915: 121) for two different opinions in this respect, perhaps due to differences between the individual dialects.

⁴¹ For instance, CUS differentiates aspectually between the pure occupation of ‘cleaning’ (*redzić*), as a job or as an actual process, and ‘cleaning’ with the goal of making something dirty ‘clean’ (*huredzić*) or between using something by consuming it (*huzić*) or as a means for achieving a task (*hužiwać*) and so on; see BREU (2003: 151–152), SCHOLZE (2008: 238–246) for more details.

⁴² The CUS opposition of grammaticalized terminativity reminds in some respects the common Slavic opposition of \pm unidirectional (or \pm determinate) of the verbs of motion, e.g. Russian *idti* ‘to walk (+unidirectional)’ – *chodit’* ‘to walk (–unidirectional)’. In fact, in CUS verbs of motion of this type are fully integrated in the aspect system with an opposition *hić* “pf” : *chodzić* “ipf” (BREU 2000a: 68–70). See also Toops (2001b) for applying the term \pm determinate to the CUS aspect opposition as a whole.

4. Final remarks

Aspect systems normally do not have a verb form neutral with respect to aspect. Therefore, one member of the aspect opposition is unmarked in the sense that its forms are also used when aspect is irrelevant because the given information is not seen as part of a textual web of situations (“obščefaktičeskoe značenje”, isolated facts), for example the imperfective aspect in Russian. It is still unclear to what extent the grammatical opposition of terminativity in CUS is also neutralized in such cases. Examples like (35) with the *l*-past of the “ipf” verb *redžić* instead of “pf” *huredžić* (SCHOLZE 2008: 248) suggest, however, that the “ipf” aspect could be the neutral form of CUS, too:

- (35) *Ja ta tón cajk najskěre po jutrach*
 I PTL ART.DEF.ACC.SG.M stuff.ACC.SG probably after Easter.LOC.PL
gor redžil nejsym.
 at:all clean.ATERM.PTCP.M NEG.AUX.PRS.1SG
 ‘I probably **did not clean** that stuff at all after Easter.’

The grammaticalization of terminativity probably goes back to the influence of German prefixes changing the meanings of simple verbs, mostly vague with respect to terminativity, to terminative meanings, combined, however, with a more or less clear change in the overall lexical meaning (BREU 2007: 130–135), e.g. *schreiben* ‘write’ : *unterschreiben* ‘sign’, *aufschreiben* ‘write down’; *gehen* ‘go, walk’ : *hinausgehen* ‘exit’; *jagen* ‘hunt’ : *erjagen* ‘catch (by hunting)’.

In fact, the same was originally also true for Slavic before the prefixed verbs specialized in the expression of the Limitative and thus became perfective (BREU 1992: 120–122), developing an imperfective partner verb in cases of clear lexical difference between the compound and the simple verb. Due to language contact, the feature of perfectivity, present – at least in its initial stages – in older Sorbian texts, too, became secondary (again) in CUS. As the secondary imperfectives in the case of lexical modifications continued to exist, the opposition of terminativity between simple and compound verbs was conferred to these suffixing pairs, too, which became the real base for the grammaticalization of terminativity. Actually, prefixing, suffixing and suppletive pairs behave in the same way with respect to the expression of terminativity, making it undoubtedly a grammatical category in the dimension of verbal aspect.

Abbreviations

AOR	= aorist	i/pf	= biaspectual (ipf + pf)
ACTI	= activity	ISTA	= inceptively static
ATERM	= aterminative (atelic, unbounded)	LOC	= locative
AUX	= auxiliary	pf	= perfective
B1	= initial boundary	PTCP	= participle
B2	= final boundary	PTL	= particle
COND	= conditional	PFV	= perfective
CUS	= Colloquial Upper Sorbian	RSTA	= relatively static
GTER	= gradually terminative	TSTA	= totally static
IMPF	= imperfect	SLS	= Standard Lower Sorbian
INCO	= inchoative	SUS	= Standard Upper Sorbian
INS	= instrumental	TERM	= terminative (telic, bounded)
ipf	= imperfective	TTER	= totally terminative
IPFV	= imperfective		

References

- BREU, WALTER (1992): Zur Rolle der Präfigierung bei der Entstehung von Aspektsystemen, in: GUIRAUD-WEBER, MARGUERITE & ZAREMBA, CHARLES (eds.), *Linguistique et slavistique. Mélanges offerts à Paul Garde*. Aix-en-Provence: Publications de l'Université de Provence, 119–135.
- BREU, WALTER (1994): Interactions between lexical, temporal and aspectual meanings, in: *Studies in Language* 18/1, 23–44.
- BREU, WALTER (1996): Komponentenmodell der Interaktion von Lexik und Aspekt, in: GIRKE, WOLFGANG (ed.), *Slavistische Linguistik 1995*. München: Otto Sagner, 37–74.
- BREU, WALTER (2000a): Der Verbalaspekt in der obersorbischen Umgangssprache im Rahmen des ILA-Modells, in: BREU, WALTER (ed.), *Slavistische Linguistik 1999*. München: Otto Sagner, 37–76.
- BREU, WALTER (2000b): Zur Position des Slavischen in einer Typologie des Verbalaspekts (Form, Funktion, Ebenenhierarchie und lexikalische Interaktion), in: BREU, WALTER (ed.), *Probleme der Interaktion von Lexik und Aspekt (ILA)*. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 21–54.
- BREU, WALTER (2003): Typ werbalneho aspekta hornjoserbskeje wobchadneje řeče w cyłosłowjanskim wobłuku, in: SCHOLZE, DIETRICH (ed.), *Im Wettstreit der Werte*. Bautzen: Domowina, 143–154.
- BREU, WALTER (2005): Verbalaspekt und Sprachkontakt. Ein Vergleich der Systeme zweier slavischer Minderheitensprachen (SWR/MSL), in: KEMPGEN, SEBASTIAN (ed.), *Slavistische Linguistik 2003*. München: Otto Sagner, 37–95.
- BREU, WALTER (2007): Der Verbalaspekt im Spannungsfeld zwischen Grammatik und Lexik, in: *Sprachwissenschaft* 32/2, 123–166.
- ELLE, LUDWIG (1992): Zur aktuellen Situation der Lausitzer Sorben, in: *Europa Ethnica* 49/1, 1–12.
- FASKA, HELMUT (1998): Koncepcija zblizenja a zjednočenja spisownych formow serbšćiny, in: FASKA, HELMUT (ed.), *Serbšćina*. Opole: Uniwersytet Opolski, 167–177.
- FASSEKE, HELMUT (1975) (ed.): *Sorbischer Sprachatlas II*. Bautzen: Domowina.
- FASSEKE, HELMUT (1981): *Grammatik der obersorbischen Schriftsprache der Gegenwart. Morphologie*. Verfaßt unter Mitarbeit von SIEGFRIED MICHAİK. Bautzen: Domowina.
- GIGER, MARKUS (2003): *Resultativa im modernen Tschechischen. Unter Berücksichtigung der Sprachgeschichte und der übrigen slavischen Sprachen*. Bern etc.: Peter Lang.
- JANAŠ, PĚT[Š] (1984², 1976): *Niedersorbische Grammatik für den Schulgebrauch*. Bautzen: Domowina.
- JENČ, HELMUT (ed.) (1986): *Wörterbuch Deutsch-obersorbisch. Słownik Němsko-hornjoserbski*. Bautzen: Domowina.
- LEHMANN, VOLKMAR (1999): Aspekt, in: JACHNOW, HELMUT (ed.), *Handbuch der sprachwissenschaftlichen Russistik und ihrer Grenzdisziplinen*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 214–242.
- LÖTZSCH, RONALD (1995): Das sorbische Tempussystem, in: THIEROFF, ROLF (ed.), *Tense systems in European languages II*. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 167–179.
- LÖTZSCH, RONALD (1998): Wliw němčiny: gramatiska interferenca a purizm we wuwicu serbšćiny, in: FASKA, HELMUT (ed.), *Serbšćina*. Opole: Uniwersytet Opolski, 77–87.
- MARTI, ROLAND (2007): Lower Sorbian – twice a minority language, in: *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 183, 31–51.
- MICHAİK, FRIDO (1959a): Der Verlust der synthetischen Vergangenheitsformen im Norden des obersorbischen Sprachgebietes, in: HORÁLEK, KAREL et al. (eds.), *Slavica Pragensia I*. Praha: Universita Karlova, 103–112.
- MICHAİK, FRIDO (1959b): Über den Aspekt in der obersorbischen Volkssprache, in: *Zeitschrift für Slawistik* 4, 241–253.
- MUCKE, KARL E. (1891): *Historische und vergleichende Laut- und Formenlehre der niedersorbischen (niederlausitzisch-wendischen) Sprache*. Leipzig, Reprint Leipzig: Zentral-Antiquariat (1965).
- SCHOLZE, LENKA (2008): *Das grammatische System der obersorbischen Umgangssprache im Sprachkontakt. Mit Grammatiktafeln im Anhang*. Bautzen: Domowina.
- SCHUSTER-ŠEWC, HINC (1984): *Gramatika hornjoserbskeje řeče – 1. zwjazk*. Budyšin: Domowina.
- ŠČERBA, L. V. (1915): *Vostočnolužickoe narěčie – Tom I (s priloženiem tekstov)*. Petrograd, Reprint Bautzen: Domowina 1973.
- SONNENHAUSER, BARBARA (2008): Aspect interpretation in Russian – a pragmatic account, in: *Journal of Pragmatics* 40, 2077–2099.
- TOOPS, GARY H. (1998): The scope of “secondary” imperfectivization in Bulgarian, Russian, and Upper Sorbian, in: MAGUIRE, ROBERT A. & TIMBERLAKE, ALAN (eds.), *American contributions to the Twelfth International Congress of Slavists*. Bloomington: Slavica, 515–529.

- TOOPS, GARY H. (2001a): The grammar of “paraphrastic imperfectives” in Latvian and Upper Sorbian, in: *Slavic and East European Journal* 45, 96–113.
- TOOPS, GARY H. (2001b): Aspectual competition and iterative contexts in Contemporary Upper Sorbian, in: *Journal of Slavic Linguistics* 9, 127–154.
- VENDLER, ZENO (1957): Verbs and times, in: *The Philosophical Review* 66, 143–160.
- WERNER, EDUARD (1996): *Studien zum sorbischen Verbum*. Bautzen: Domowina.
- WERNER, EDUARD (2003): *Die Verbalaffigierung im Obersorbischen*. Bautzen: Domowina.

WALTER BREU
Universität Konstanz
FG Sprachwissenschaft/Slavistik
D - 78457 Konstanz
GERMANY
Walter.Breu@uni-konstanz.de