

Hindi-Urdu Compound Verbs and Russian Aspect.
The Evidence of Translations (Abstract)

Rainer Kimmig, Universität Tübingen

rainer.kimmig@uni-tuebingen.de

When analysing the semantics of aspecto-temporal forms in real texts, one is constantly confronted with a notorious amount of cases which are hard to interpret.

(GLOVINSKAJA 2001: 255; translation and emphasis mine)

The notion of aspect has been applied to the description/analysis of the verbal system of Hindi-Urdu in at times seemingly contradictory or mutually exclusive approaches. There are at least three different aspectual contrasts that are widely used in the discussion of the Hindi-Urdu verb:

1. non-progressive vs progressive:

kartā hai — kar rahā hai

This contrast corresponds to a large extent to the one between simple and progressive tenses in English (*does – is doing*), the progressive tenses being the *marked partner* of the opposition.

2. non-anterior vs anterior: *kartā hai — kiyā hai*

This contrast corresponds to a large extent to the one between simple and anterior tenses in English (*does – has done*), the anterior tenses being the *marked partner* of the opposition.

3. non-perfective vs perfective (in the strict sense of Slavic ‘vid’):

This contrast has been used to analyse the contrast between simple verb and ‘compound verb’ in Hindi-Urdu: *kiyā — kar diyā* (the difference between the two forms does not show up in English, but often corresponds to Russian *делал – сделал*). According to a tradition established by Roman Jakobson (JAKOBSON [1932] 1971), the Russian perfective is mostly analysed as the *marked partner* of the opposition. More disputed is the intrinsic ‘meaning’ of the perfective aspect: while some linguists try to establish a broad semantic ‘invariant’ (‘completeness’, ‘integrity’, ‘boundedness’ etc.), others, taking Maslov’s seminal article (MASLOV 1948) as their starting-point, prefer to work out a series of ‘meanings’ each restricted to a particular group of verbs (GLOVINSKAJA 2001, PADUCHEVA 2009 and 2010, ZALIZNYAK et.al. 2015), but all arguably connected by some family resemblance.

The analysis of the Hindi-Urdu compound verb as

a close parallel to the perfective aspect of Slavic languages has been upheld by linguists like Baranikov, Pořízka, Nespital and Hook, but was rejected by others, most categorically by Masica (MASICA 1991: 326-330).

Problems are due to arise when these three types of ‘aspect’ are not clearly and unambiguously kept apart (on this, see Sasse 2001):

- The marked partner of (1) is often identified with the unmarked partner of (3), resulting in a misleading concept of ‘imperfectivity’.

NOTE: The non-progressive in Hindi-Urdu is compatible with the compound verb (*vah gum ho jātī hai* ‘she disappears’), a behaviour that has only very restricted parallels in Russian, but, on the other hand, a clear counterpart in the use of the perfective present in, e.g., Czech (NÁDENÍČEK 2011).

- In Hindi-Urdu, the simple past (‘aorist’ according to Montaut, who follows Benveniste) of the simple verb is often analysed as ‘perfective’, quite in contradiction to some of its usages in actual texts, e.g. the so-called ‘perfectivity paradox’ (SINGH 1991), which ceases to be a ‘paradox’ when this tense is analysed as aspectually unspecified.

The paper will present an analysis of the data collected in a comparative study of literary translations from Russian into Hindi and Urdu. Methodologically, it follows comparative translation studies done for European and South Asian languages (MASLOV 1974, NÁDENÍČEK 2011); some studies in contrastive grammar are also taken into consideration (e.g. BAHUGUNA 1986, CHATTERJEE 1988). The paper will discuss both dramatical dialogue (Gorki’s ‘Lower Depths’) and narrative prose (Rasputin’s novel ‘Farewell to Matyora’).

Concerning narrative prose, there is a short chapter on aspect in DAŠČENKO 2007, which gives a set of rules for the translation of the Hindi-Urdu simple past, specifying when it has to be rendered by the perfective and when by the imperfective aspect in Russian. Daščenko’s rules are corroborated by the data collected from Rasputin’s novel and its Hindi translation. In narrative prose, there are much more perfective verbs in Russian than compound verbs in Hindi-Urdu, but the cases where both languages ‘match’ are clearly a subset of the cases where Russian uses the perfective aspect.

The data from dramatical dialogue shows a remarkably high correspondence between the Hindi-Urdu compound verb and the Russian perfective aspect in the non-narrative register, specifically in the future tense, the subjunctive and the imperative, an area often neglected or excluded in aspectual studies (“Perfective is the aspect used for narrating sequences of events [...] It is thus often used to refer to situations that occurred in the

past”, BYBEE et al. 1994, a definition as misleading as influential). The paper will provide an exact ratio both for the Hindi and the Urdu translations.

Based on these findings, the paper will suggest some grammatical conclusions about both parallels and differences between the Hindi-Urdu compound verb and the Russian perfective aspect.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

a) Sources:

- GORKI (R) = Горький, Максим (2014 [1902]): На дне. Пьесы. СПб: Азбука.
 GORKI (H) = गोकर्ी : रसतल । अनुवादक मदनलाल 'मधु' । मास्को: रादुगा 1985।
 GORKI (U) = گورکی کے ڈرامے (Maiksim Gorki ke drāme). <https://www.marxists.org/urdu/Miscellaneous/PDFs/004-GORKI.pdf>
 RASPUTIN (R) = Распутин, Валентин Г. (2016 [1976]): Прощание с Матёрой. Повести. СПб: Азбука.
 RASPUTIN (H) = रसपूतलन, वलेन्तीन प्रलगोर्येवलच : तीन रूसी उपन्यास । हलंदी अनुवादक: हेमचन्द्र पंडे ।

b) General Literature:

- BAHUGUNA 1986 = बहुगुणा, ल० मो० : हलंदी-बंगला : संयुक्त क्रिया (व्यतिरेकी विश्लेषण) । केंद्रीय हलंदी संस्थान : अगरा ।
 BONDARKO (1971) = Бондарко, А.В. (1971): Вид и время русского глагола (значение и употребление). Москва: Издательство „Просвещение“. (Repr. in BONDARKO 2005)
 — (1995) = Бондарко, А.В. (1995): Die Semantik des Verbalaspekts im Russischen. Семантика глагольного вида в русском языке. Beiträge zur Slavistik xxiv. Frankfurt am Main etc: Peter Lang.
 — (2005) = Бондарко, А.В.: Теория морфологических категорий и аспектологические исследования. Москва: Языки славянских культур.
 BYBEE, JOAN et al. (1994): *The Evolution of Grammar*. The University of Chicago Press.
 DAŠČENKO (2007) = Дащенко, Г.М.: Грамматический аспект перевода с урду/хинди на русский язык. (*The grammatical aspect of translation from Hindi/Urdu to Russian*). Москва: Степаненко.
 CHATTERJEE, R. (1988): Aspect and Meaning in Slavic and Indic. Amsterdam etc: Benjamins.
 FORSYTH, J. (1970): *A Grammar of Aspect*. Usage and meaning in the Russian Verb. Cambridge University Press.
 GLOVINSKAJA (2001) = Гловинская, М.Я.: Многозначность и синонимия в видео-временной системе русского глагола. Москва: «Русские словари», «Азбуковник».
 HOOK, P.E. (1974): *The Compound Verb in Hindi*. University of Michigan, Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies.
 — (1991): The emergence of perfective aspect in Indo-Aryan Languages. In: TRAUGOTT, E.C./HEINE, B. (1991): *Approaches to Grammaticalization*. Vol. II: Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins; pp. 59–89.
 — (2001): Where do Compound Verbs Come From? (And Where are They Going?). *The Yearbook of South Asian Languages and Linguistics*; pp. 102–130.
 JAKOBSON, R. ([1932] 1971): *Zur Struktur des russischen Verbums*. In: *Selected Writings II: Word and Language*. The Hague, Paris: Mouton; p. 3–15.
 LIPEROVSKY (1984) = Липеровский, В.П.: Глагол в языке хинди. Москва: Издательство «Наука».
 MASICA, C. (1991): *The Indo-Aryan languages*. Cambridge etc: Cambridge University Press.
 MASLOV (1948) = Маслов, Ю.С.: Вид и лексическое значение глагола в современном русском литературном языке // Изв. АН СССР. Отд-ние лит. и яз. 1948. Т.7. Вып.4. С. 303–316. (Repr. in Maslov 2004: 71–90.
 — (1974) = Maslov, J.S. (1974): *Zur Semantik der Perfektivitätsopposition*. In: *Wiener Slavistisches Jahrbuch 20* (1974), S. 107–112.
 — (2004) = Маслов, Ю.С.: Избранные труды. Аспектология. Общее языкознание. Москва: Языки славянской культуры.
 MASLOV, Y.S., ed., (1985): *Contrastive studies in verbal aspect in Russian, English, French and German*. Heidelberg: Groos. [Studies in descriptive linguistics 14]
 MONTAUT, A. (1991): *Aspects, voix et diathèses en hindi moderne: syntaxe, sémantique, énonciation*. Louvain: Peeters.
 — (2004): *A grammar of Hindi*. München: LINCOM Europa.
 NÁDENÍČEK, P. (2011): *Das tschechische Aspektsystem im Vergleich mit dem Verbalaspekt des Russischen und Polnischen*. Dissertation. Hamburg.
 PADUCHEVA (2009): Падучева, Е.В.: Статьи разных лет. Москва: Языки славянских культур.
 — (2010) = Падучева, Е.В.: Семантические исследования. Семантика времени и вида в русском языке. Семантика нарратива. Москва: Языки славянской культуры.
 SASSE, H.-J. (2001): *Recent Activity in the Theory of Aspect: Accomplishments, Achievements, or just Non-progressive State? Institut für Sprachwissenschaft, Universität zu Köln*. [Arbeitspapier Nr. 40 (Neue Folge)]
 SINGH, M. (1991): *The Perfective Paradox: Or How to Eat Your Cake and Have it Too*. *Proceedings of the Berkeley Linguistic Society*.
 ZALIZNYAK et al. (2015) = Зализняк, А.А., Микаэлян, И.Л., Шмелев, А.Д.: *Русская аспектология: В защиту видовой пары*. Москва: Языки славянской культуры.