ON THE IMPERFECTIVE AND PERFECTIVE ASPECT IN ESTONIAN AND LATVIAN

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Abstract. This article presents a brief overview and comparison of the imperfective and perfective aspect in Estonian and Latvian. The main means of expressing the perfective and imperfective aspect in Estonian are the case opposition of the direct object (the nominative/genitive or the partitive), the use of verb particles, and the general context. In Latvian, the opposition of the perfective and imperfective aspect is mainly expressed by existence or absence of verb prefixes, adverbs, and also the context. In Latvian, verb prefixes, besides perfectivity, may also add or modify the lexical meaning of the verb. We compare how the perfective and imperfective aspect are expressed in both languages in the case of transitive verbs, based on the correspondences found in a text corpus of literary works and their translations.

1. Introduction

The present article focuses on the central distinctions within the aspect category, the imperfective and perfective aspect. The purpose of the article is to outline the most common means of expressing the perfective and imperfective aspect in Estonian and Latvian and to compare their practical use in both languages. In Estonian, the main means under observation are the object case opposition and the use of verbs with perfective verb particles and adverbials. In Latvian, we discuss the use of verb prefixes, unprefixed verbs, and adverbs.

A comparative overview of aspect in Estonian and Latvian has so far not been written. A number of authors have explored the Latvian or Estonian aspect separately. The Latvian aspect has been discussed by Ahero et al. (1959), Mathiassen (1997), Holvoet (2001), Soida (2009), Kalnača (2005, 2014), Horiguchi (2014), and others, while aspect in

Estonian has been discussed, among others, by Metslang (2001), Erelt (2013), Norvik and Piiroja (2013). One can also find some comparative studies between different Baltic and Finnic languages: Estonian and Finnish (Sulkala 1996), Estonian, Finnish, and Lithuanian (Klaas 1999), and, from the Latvian point of view, a brief overview of aspect correspondences between Latvian and Finnish (Kalnača 2005). A small research has been done on the Latvian verb prefix *ie-* and its correspondences in Estonian (Zagorska 2016), but the main focus of this article is on the equivalents of one Latvian prefix in Estonian, not on aspect in particular.

Studying in detail the differences and similarities of aspect between both languages is needed for better general understanding of how aspect operates in these and other neighbouring and related languages. It also helps to shed light on language contacts and encourages language teaching and learning as well as the development of further study materials and dictionaries of Estonian and Latvian.

The aim of the present article is to provide a preliminary comparative insight into Latvian and Estonian aspect. Chapter 2 introduces the method and the material of the study. Chapter 3 will review the general outline of aspect in Latvian and Estonian. In Chapters 4 and 5, the particular means for expressing perfectivity and imperfectivity in the case of transitive verbs are compared, using the examples from the corpus of literary translations between the two languages. Chapter 6 presents the conclusions about the differences and similarities between the expression of the perfective and imperfective aspect in both languages according to the examples from the text corpus.

2. Method and material

In this study, we firstly provide an outline of the main means for expressing the perfective and imperfective aspect in Estonian and Latvian. Secondly, the contrastive method is used to analyse the example sentences and their respective translations in both languages containing the described means. The analysis focuses on transitive verbs, leaving intransitive verbs for the further research. The current work presents a preliminary general outline of expressing the perfective and imperfective aspect in Estonian and Latvian and does not aim to provide a quantitative analysis or a complete list of all possible aspect correspondences. These issues are left for further investigation.

As there is no public parallel Estonian and Latvian literary text corpus available, we use for our analysis examples taken from a self-made text corpus that consists of Estonian and Latvian literary works and their translations.

The Estonian text corpus consists of two literary works: "Viimane Valgesulg" (1967) by Jaan Rannap and its translation "Pēdējais Balt-spalvis" (1970) by Džuljeta Plakidis (further in the examples − R) and "Mina olin siin" (2005) by Sass Henno and its translation "Šeit biju es" (2006) by Maima Grīnberga-Preisa (further in the examples − H).

The Latvian text corpus consists of three Latvian literary works: "Aka" (1972) by Regīna Ezera and its translation "Kaev" (1990) by Valli Helde (further in the examples − E), "Gulta ar zelta kāju" (1984) by Zigmunds Skujiņš and its translation "Kuldjalaga voodi" (1989) by Oskar Kuningas (further in the examples − S), and "Meitene, kas nogrieza man matus" (2011) by Kristīne Želve and its translation "Juukselõikaja-tüdruk" (2014) by Hannes Korjus (further in the examples − Ž).

3. An outline of aspect in Estonian and Latvian

In Estonian, similarly to the other Finnic languages, the perfective and imperfective aspect is not considered a consistent grammatical category of the verb as it is not expressed regularly or obligatorily. (EKG II: 25, Erelt 2013: 73) In Estonian as well as in Finnish, aspect is expressed rather at the level of the sentence (utterance) as it presents itself in the nouns connected to the verbs. (Kangasmaa-Minn 1984: 83−86, Sulkala 1996: 168−169) In the case of transitive verbs, the main grammatical means for marking the perfective and imperfective aspect is the opposition of the object cases, the total object in the nominative or the genitive, and the partial object in the partitive case (Erelt 2013: 73). Secondly, Estonian uses more often than Finnish the so-called bounders (particles connected to the verb) as lexical means for marking perfectivity in a sentence. In addition, aspect is expressed through verb semantics, semantics of the context, progressive constructions, and other means. (EKG II: 25–26, Sulkala 1996: 169, Klaas 1999, Metslang 2001: 443, Erelt 2013: 74) As Klaas (1996: 43) points out, one can observe a transition from the Finnic nominal and synthetic aspect towards the Indo-European analytical verbal aspect in Estonian.

In Latvian there is no generally agreed treatment of the verb aspect – it has been postulated as a grammatical category (Ahero et al. 1959, Mathiassen 1997) or a lexical grammatical category (Paegle 2003, Kalnača 2004). Usually, Latvian verb aspect is expressed by two means: opposition of the imperfective/perfective aspect (unprefixed/prefixed verb) and the semelfactive/iterative aspect (unsuffixed/suffixed verb) (Paegle 2003: 132, Kalnača 2013: 533, Kalnača 2014: 91). The imperfective and perfective aspect in Latvian is expressed in two ways: morphologically and syntactically. The imperfective and perfective aspect is expressed morphologically by using the opposition between an *unprefixed verb* (imperf.) and a *prefixed verb* (perf.). It is expressed syntactically first of all by an opposition between an *unprefixed verb + adverb* (imperf.) and a *prefixed verb* (perf.), and secondly by bi-aspectual verbs, which express imperfectivity and/or perfectivity in the contextual use, not by a prefix. (Kalnača 2013: 533, Kalnača 2014: 92).

In the case of Latvian verb aspect, there are several nuances that should be taken into account, such as the lexical meaning of the verb, the word-formation means (prefixes and suffixes), semantics of the context, verb tense forms, etc. (Paegle 2003: 131, Kalnača 2013: 531, Kalnača 2014: 89) According to Kalnača (2014: 89), the verb aspect "is simultaneously a word formation and a contextual phenomenon; the expression of the form is connected with different linguistic features: derivative, lexical, morphological, morphonological, and syntactic".

Aspect in Latvian is generally modulated by a verb and in Estonian by a noun case alteration or verb particle constructions. Both languages use different means: morphological, grammatical, syntactic, and lexical. In the following chapters we will observe more closely the particular means for expressing the perfective and imperfective aspect.

4. Means of expressing perfectivity in Estonian and Latvian

Regarding Estonian, we will mainly discuss two possibilities for marking perfectivity in the perfective/imperfective opposition. Firstly, perfectivity is expressed by the total object in the genitive singular (*Ostsin uue kleidi.* 'I bought a new dress'), the nominative singular (*Osta uus kleit!* 'Buy a new dress!'), or the nominative in the plural (*Ostsin uued püksid.* 'I bought new trousers'). The choice of the object case depends on several factors, among others verb semantics (aspect of the verb). Verbs that semantically express imperfective activity are

called partitive verbs (e.g. *armastama* 'to love', *mõtlema* 'to think') and they usually take the partial object. Perfective verbs (e.g. *kaotama* 'to lose') take the total object. The third group of verbs called neutral or aspect verbs (mostly transitive, e.g. *ehitama* 'to build') can take both, the partial or the total object, which in turn defines the aspect of the sentence. (Erelt 2013: 72−73)

Secondly, perfectivity can be marked in Estonian by bounders – perfective verb particles such as *ära* 'away, off', *läbi* 'through', *välja* 'out', *üles* 'up' and adverbials, e.g. *lõpuni* 'till the end', *täielikult* 'completely'. (Erelt 2013: 73−74) Of these, the particle *ära* is the most frequent and least ambiguous marker of perfectivity. (EKG II: 25, Metslang 2001: 444) In the case of perfective and aspect verbs, such bounders only stress the perfectivity already expressed through verb semantics or the total object. In the case of transitive aspect verbs, however, the bounders help to overcome synonymy of the object cases, caused in Estonian by changes in case endings (apocope). (Metslang 2001: 444–445, Erelt 2013: 74) For example, in the sentence *Kass sõi kala.* ('A cat ate the fish' / 'A cat was eating (some) fish') the direct object *kala* 'fish' could equally be interpreted as the genitive case marking perfectivity or the partitive case marking imperfectivity. Adding *ära* makes the sentence unambiguously perfective: *Kass sõi kala ära* 'The cat ate up the fish'. Bounders also allow changing the aspect of imperfective (partitive) verbs into perfective, in which case they serve as the main and obligatory perfectivity markers: *Jüri luges raamatu läbi.* 'Jüri read the book through.' (Erelt 2013: 75) Such bounders carry a clear perfective meaning and their use for expressing the perfective aspectual meaning is spreading in Estonian, showing the need for a more clear analytical marker connected to a verb (Metslang 2001: 444).

In Latvian, the main device for marking the perfective and imperfective aspect is the use of verb prefixes. There are 11 verb prefixes in Latvian (*aiz-*, *ap-*, *at-*, *ie-*, *iz-*, *no-*, *pa-*, *pār-*, *pie-*, *sa-*, *uz-*) and besides changing imperfect (unprefixed) verbs into perfect (prefixed) verbs, they also may have a second purpose – to change, modulate, or create a new lexical meaning of a verb in a spatial, temporal, or quantitative way. (Mathiassen 1997: 118, Soida 2009: 228, Kalnača 2013: 534, Kalnača 2014: 93). The verb without a prefix carries an imperfective meaning: *Es lasīju grāmatu* 'I was reading a book', while prefix changes the meaning into perfective *Es izlasīju grāmatu* 'I read the book through / I finished reading a book'.

All 11 prefixes make verbs perfective and modulate the lexical meaning of the verb, but in a few cases the prefix may give only a

perfective meaning (without adding or changing the lexical meaning of the verb), e.g. *pirkt – nopirkt* 'to buy' (Ahero et al. 1959: 567, Kalnača 2013: 534). The negative prefix *ne-* is the only prefix that is not connected to aspect; it only makes the verb negative *ne-pirkt* (imperf.) 'not to buy' – *ne-no-pirkt* (perf.) 'not to buy' (Kalnača 2013: 534, Vulāne 2013: 281, Kalnača 2014: 93).

In Latvian, in the case of directional verbs, it is also possible to add an adverb to an already prefixed verb, e.g. *ieiet iekšā* 'to go inside', where the adverb supposedly repeats and strengthens the direction, which is already expressed by the prefix and therefore is not supposed to be connected to the verb aspect. (Ahero et al. 1959: 578, Kalnača 2014: 99).

The following examples from the corpora of Latvian and Estonian literary translations give an overview of the correspondences in expressing perfectivity in both directions – from Estonian into Latvian and from Latvian into Estonian, using the previously mentioned markers.

4.1. Estonian total object (genitive/nominative) and Latvian prefixed verb

4.1.1. Estonian total object (genitive/nominative) > Latvian prefixed verb

In example 1a, the Estonian direct object *toit* 'food' is used in the genitive singular marking the action as perfective. In Latvian perfectivity is expressed by using the verb prefix *ie-* which also expresses the directional meaning 'into', supporting the noun *refrigerator*.

(1)   a. Poiss   viskas   toidu   külmkappi   /.../ (H, 32)
         boy.NOM   threw.PST.3SG   food.GEN   refrigerator.ILL

      Puisis   ie-meta   ēdienu   ledusskapī   /.../ (H, 4:23)
      boy.NOM   PREF-throw.PST.3SG   food.ACC   refrigerator.LOC

      'The boy threw the food into the refrigerator.'[1]

In example 1b, the Estonian direct object *mõned kaunimad portreed* 'some beautiful portraits' is in the nominative plural, which marks perfectivity. In Latvian, again, perfectivity is expressed by the verb prefix *pie-*.

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1   The English translations are given according to the first example.

b. /.../ kinnitas   üliõpilane   mõned   kaunimad
    attach.PST.3SG student.NOM   some.PL.NOM   beautiful.SUPL.PL.NOM

    portreed   oma   voodi   kohale.   (R, 45)
    portrait.PL.NOM   own.GEN   bed.GEN   above.ALL

/.../ students   dažas   skaistākās
   student.NOM.M   some.PL.ACC   beautiful.SUPL.PL.ACC

   fotogrāfijas   pie-stiprināja   virs   savas
   photograph.PL.ACC   PREF-attach.PST.3SG   above   own.GEN.F

   gultas.   (R, 41)
   bed.GEN

'/…/ the student attached some of the most beautiful portraits above his bed.'

4.1.2. Latvian prefixed verb > Estonian total object (genitive/nominative)

In example 2a, the Latvian prefixed verb *atrisināt* 'to solve' is the perfective of the verb *risināt* 'to solve' and the prefix *at-* has only the perfective meaning. It is translated into Estonian by using the direct object *paisuv konflikt* 'emerging conflict' in the genitive singular (total object), which marks perfectivity.

(2) a. /.../ Rūdolfs   steigšus   at-risināja   briestošo
     Rudolf.NOM   quickly   PREF-solve.PST.3SG   emerging.PTCP.ACC

     konfliktu.   (E, 260)
     conflict.ACC

/.../ lahendas   Rūdolf   kiiresti   paisuva
   solve.PST.3SG   Rudolf.NOM   quickly   emerging.PTCP.GEN

   konflikti.   (E, 192)
   conflict.GEN

'Rudolf quickly solved the emerging conflict.'

In example 2b, the Latvian prefixed verb *noņemt* 'to take off' is the perfective of the verb *ņemt* 'to take' and additionally the prefix *no-* also supports the direction of the noun phrase *no krēsla atzveltnes* 'from the back of the chair'. In Estonian, perfectivity is expressed by the direct object *riided* 'clothes' in the nominative plural (total object).

b. Laura   no-ņēma   drēbes   no   krēsla
    Laura.NOM   PREF-take.PST.3SG clothes.PL.ACC from   chair.GEN

    atzveltnes   /.../ (E, 117)
    back.GEN

    Laura   võttis   tooli   seljatoelt
    Laura.NOM   take.PST.3SG chair.GEN   back_rest.ABL

    riided   /.../ (E, 89)
    clothes.PL.NOM

    'Laura took the clothes from the back of a chair.'

The previous examples show that while perfectivity in Estonian is expressed by the direct object in the genitive (singular) or the nominative (plural), in Latvian perfectivity may be expressed by the verb prefix and vice versa. In addition, the verb prefix in Latvian also adds some extra meaning to the verb, supporting the noun or the noun phrase in the directional meaning.

4.2. Estonian total object (genitive/nominative) + verb particle and Latvian prefixed verb and prefixed verb + adverb

4.2.1. Estonian total object (genitive/nominative) + verb particle > Latvian prefixed verb

In example 3a, perfectivity in Estonian is expressed by two means – the direct object *aken* 'window' in the genitive singular and the verb particle *kinni* 'closed, shut' together with the verb *panema* 'to put'. The verb particle *kinni* supports the direction. It is translated into Latvian by the prefixed verb *aiztaisīt* 'to shut' (the perfective form of verb *taisīt* 'to do'), where the prefix *aiz-* expresses both perfectivity and direction. In addition, in Latvian it is also be possible to add the adverb *ciet* 'close' to the prefixed verb (about the prefixed verb + adverb see 4.2.3.)

(3) a. Poiss   pani   akna   kinni /.../ (H, 47)
         boy.NOM   put.PST.3SG   window.GEN   shut

         Puisis   aiz-taisīja   logu /.../   (H, 5:08)
         boy.NOM   PREF-shut.PST.3SG   window.ACC

         'The boy shut the window.'

In example 3b, perfectivity in Estonian is expressed also by two means – the direct object in the nominative plural *teksad* 'jeans' and the verb particle *ära* with the verb *pesema* 'to wash'. The verb particle *ära* does not add any directional meaning; here it is purely a perfective marker. In Latvian, the prefixed verb *izmazgāt* 'to wash (clean)' is the perfective form of the verb *mazgāt* 'to wash', and similarly to the Estonian verb particle *ära*, the prefix *iz-* in this case has only the perfective meaning.

b. "/…/ ma   pesen   su   teksad   ära?" (H, 36)
            I.NOM   wash.PRS.1SG your.GEN jeans.NOM VP

   "/…/ es   iz-mazgāšu   tavas   džinsenes?" (H, 4: 39)
            I.NOM   PREF-wash.FUT.1SG   your.PL.ACC jeans.ACC

   'I will wash your jeans.'

4.2.2. Latvian prefixed verb > Estonian total object (genitive/nominative) + verb particle

In example 4a, the Latvian prefixed verb *atkorķēt* 'to uncork' is the perfective of the verb *korķēt* 'to cork', and the prefix *at-* means the same as the adverb *vaļā* 'open'; therefore it has two meanings – perfective and directional. In Estonian, perfectivity is expressed by the direct object *šampanja* 'champagne' in the genitive singular and the verb particle *lahti* 'open' together with the verb *korkima* 'to cork'.

(4) a. Mēs   at-korķējām   šampanieti   /…/ (Ž, 41)
            we.NOM   PREF-cork.PST.1PL champagne.ACC

        Korkisime   šampanja   lahti /…/   (Ž, 26)
        cork.PST.1PL   champagne.GEN   open

        'We uncorked the champagne /…/.'

In example 4b, the Latvian prefixed verb *pierakstīt* 'to write' is perfective of the verb *rakstīt* 'to write' and the prefix *pie-* adds a perfective meaning. In Estonian perfectivity is expressed by the direct objects *ideed* 'ideas' and *mõtted* 'thoughts' in the nominative plural and the verb particle *üles* 'up' together with the verb *kirjutama* 'to write'.

b. /.../ kladīti,   kurā   pie-rakstīju   idejas
   notebook.ACC which.LOC PREF-write.PST.1SG idea.PL.ACC

   filmām,   romāniem,   stāstiem   un   savas
   film.PL.DAT novel.PL.DAT story.PL.DAT and own.PL.ACC

   domas.   (Ž, 29)
   thoughts.PL.ACC

/.../ klade,   kuhu   kirjutasin   üles   oma
   notebook.GEN where.ILL write.PST.1SG up   own.GEN

   filmide,   romaanide,   juttude   ideed   ja
   film.PL.GEN novel.PL.GEN story.PL.GEN idea.PL.NOM and

   oma   mõtted   (Ž, 19)
   own.GEN thought.PL.NOM

   '/.../ notebook where I wrote down the ideas for films, novels, stories, and my thoughts.'

4.2.3. Estonian total object (genitive/nominative) + verb particle > Latvian prefixed verb + adverb

Example 5 in Estonian is similar to example 3a where perfectivity is expressed by the direct object – *majauks* 'house door' in the genitive singular and the verb particle *lahti* 'open' together with the verb *lükkama* 'to push'. The Latvian translation in example 5 differs from 3a because besides perfectivity, which is expressed by the prefixed verb *atgrūst* 'to push' (perfective of the verb *grūst* 'to push') where the prefix *at-* means 'open', there is also an additional adverb *vaļā* 'open'.

(5) Tüdruk lükkas   majaukse   lahti. (R, 31)
   girl.NOM push.PST.3SG house_door.GEN open

   Meitene at-grūda   vaļā   mājas   durvis   (R, 4:23)
   girl.NOM PREF-push.PST.3SG open house.GEN door.PL.ACC

   'The girl pushed the door house open.'

As mentioned in Chapter 2, an adverb can be added to an already prefixed verb; however, perfectivity is already manifested by the verb prefix, therefore the adverb does not directly change or influence perfectivity. The adverb is added only for emphasizing the direction.

4.2.4. Latvian prefixed verb + adverb > Estonian total object
(genitive/nominative) + verb particle

Example 6 in Latvian is similar to example 5 where the prefixed verb *izlikt* 'to lay out' (perfective of the verb *likt* 'to lay'), where prefix *iz-* expresses both perfectivity and the direction 'out', is complemented by the adverb *laukā* 'out', having the same meaning as the verb prefix. It is translated into Estonian in the same way as in example 4a, and here perfectivity is expressed by the direct object *kraam* 'belongings, stuff' in the genitive singular and the verb particle *välja* 'out' together with the verb *laduma* 'to lay'. The Latvian adverb does not influence the translation into Estonian since the prefixed verb already expresses perfectivity.

(6)   /…/ viņš   tikai iz-lika   laukā mantas   /.../ (S, 223)
            he.NOM   only   PREF-lay.PST.3SG out   belongings.ACC

    /.../ ta   ainult ladus   välja kraami   /.../ (S, 161)
            he.NOM only   PREF-lay.PST.3SG out   belongings.GEN

    '/…/ he only laid out belongings /.../.'

These examples reveal that perfectivity in Estonian is also expressed by a verb particle and the total object (genitive/nominative). In this case the basic correspondence in Latvian is still a prefixed verb. In Latvian perfectivity of the prefixed verb can be translated into Estonian also by a verb particle and the total object. However, in Latvian it is also possible to add an adverb to the prefixed verb, but in Estonian it will still be a verb particle – regardless of the presence or absence of an adverb with a prefixed verb.

5. Means of expressing imperfectivity in Estonian and Latvian

When aspect is expressed through case alternation in Estonian, the partial object in the partitive case can have an imperfective interpretation, e.g. *Linnud ehitasid pesasid.* – 'The birds were building nests.' Sometimes, however, both imperfective and perfective interpretations are possible: *Tõin turult maasikaid.* – 'I brought / was bringing some strawberries from the market.' Since aspect is not a regularly expressed category in Estonian, it can be unspecified in the case of durative situations, and a particular interpretation of the aspect depends on the time and aspect of the context. (EKG II: 25)

In Latvian, however, an unprefixed verb expresses imperfectivity. The following examples present the correspondences of the imperfective aspect of Estonian and Latvian in literary translations.

5.1. Estonian partial object (partitive) and Latvian unprefixed verb

5.1.1. Estonian partial object (partitive) > Latvian unprefixed verb

In example 7 the Estonian direct object *moosipirukas* 'jam pie' is in the partitive singular, which, according to the context, means that the action is imperfective – it does not specify how many pies were baked. In the Latvian translation this partiality (imperfectivity) is expressed by the unprefixed verb *cept* 'to bake'.

(7) Ema   küpsetas   köögis   moosipirukat. (R, 40)
     mother.NOM   bake.PST.3SG   kitchen.INE   jam_pie.PART

     Virtuvē   māte   cepa   pīrāgus   ar
     kitchen.LOC   mother.NOM   bake.PST.3SG   pie.PL.ACC   with

     ievārījumu.   (R, 37)
     jam.ACC

     'Mother was baking a jam pie in the kitchen.'

5.1.2. Latvian unprefixed verb > Estonian partial object (partitive)

In example 8 the Latvian unprefixed verb *ēst* 'to eat' expresses imperfectivity; it does not specify how much of the bread was eaten and if it was eaten up. In the Estonian translation imperfectivity is expressed by the direct object *leib* 'bread' in the partitive. Therefore, it expresses the same meaning as in Latvian – the amount of the bread eaten and the end of the action (completeness) are unspecified.

(8) Mēs   kopā   ēdām   maizi.   (E, 101)
     we.NOM   together   eat.PST.1PL bread.ACC

     Me   sõime   koos   leiba.   (E, 77)
     we.NOM   eat.PST.1PL together   bread.PART

     'We were eating bread together.'

5.2. Estonian partial object (partitive) and Latvian unprefixed verb + adverb

In Latvian, in addition to the morphological means of expressing the perfective/imperfective opposition by a prefixed and an unprefixed verb, it can be expressed also syntactically by opposing a prefixed verb (e.g. *ieiet* (perf.) 'to go in') with the construction *unprefixed verb + adverb* (e.g. *iet iekšā* (imperf.) 'to go in') (Kalnača 2013: 535). This construction is used mainly in spatial orientation where spatial adverbs correspond to the corresponding verb prefix(es) and express movement towards a certain goal (Ahero et al. 1959: 571). According to Kalnača (2014: 98), "the verb and adverb in these constructions do not form a monolithic lexical, morphological, and syntactic unit, as the adverb has not grammaticalized and has preserved its adverbial function in the sentence, its independent word stress, and its adverbial meaning". This construction can be used in the present tense if the prefixed (perfective) form is not suitable and also in other cases when the imperfective action in spatial orientation needs to be expressed (Ahero et al. 1959: 576, Kalnača 2013: 537).

5.2.1. Estonian partial object (partitive) > Latvian unprefixed verb + adverb

In example 9 in Estonian the direct object *kolmeteistkümnes* 'thirteenth' is used in the partitive singular expressing imperfectivity and is accompanied by the adverb *parajasti* 'currently', meaning that the person was fishing [out] the thirteenth mouse from the blades of grass. It is translated into Latvian by the verb *makšķerēt* 'to fish' with an adverb *laukā* 'out' and forms the construction *unprefixed verb + adverb*, which expresses imperfectivity.

(9) Parajasti õngitses   ta   rohukõrte   vahelt
      currently   fish.PST.3SG   he.NOM   blade_of_grass.PL.GEN   among.ABL

      kolmeteistkümnendat. (R, 41)
      thirteenth.PART

      Šobrīd   viņš   no   zāles   stiebriem   makšķerēja
      currently   he.NOM   from   grass.GEN   blade.PL.DAT   fish.PST.3SG

      laukā   trīspadsmito   (R, 37)
      out   thirteenth.ACC

      'He was currently fishing out the thirteenth [mouse] from blades of grass.'

5.2.2. Latvian unprefixed verb + adverb > Estonian partial object (partitive)

In example 10 imperfectivity is expressed by all of the given verbs, but the verb *lauzt* 'to break' is used with the adverb *vaļā* 'open', forming the imperfective construction *unprefixed verb + adverb*. In Estonian the direct object *tünnid* 'barrels' is in the plural partitive, which marks imperfectivity, and the verb particle *lahti* 'open' and the verb *kangutama* 'to pry' are used.

(10) Viņš   nesa   maisus,   krāva   kastes   un
      he.NOM   carry.PST.3SG   sack.PL.ACC   load.PST.3SG box.PL.ACC   and

      staipīja   saiņus,   lauza   vaļā   mucas,
      carry.PST.3SG   bundle.PL.ACC   break.PST.3SG open   barrel.PL.ACC

      svēra   un   mērīja,   cilāja   un
      weigh.PST.3SG   and measure.PST.3SG lift.PST.3SG   and

      valstīja.   (S, 146)
      roll.PST.3SG

      Indriķis   kandis   kotte   ja   tassis
      Indriķis.NOM   carry.PST.3SG   bag.PL.PART   and   cart.PST.3SG

      pakke,   kangutas   tünne   lahti, kaalus
      pack.PL.PART   pry.PST.3SG   barrel.PL.PART open   weigh.PST.3SG

      ja   mõõtis,   tõstis   ja   veeretas.   (S, 107)
      and measure.PST.3SG lift.PST.3SG   and roll.PST.3SG

      'Indrikis carried sacks and packages, broke open barrels, weighed and measured, lifted and rolled.'

5.3. Estonian progressive and Latvian unprefixed verb

In some cases the imperfective and perfective aspect are expressed by less central means or by markers, which may leave the aspect interpretation open. This is also reflected in the translations of Estonian and Latvian literary works. It has been argued whether or not the progressive can be categorized under imperfectivity (Norvik and Piiroja 2013: 61–62). In Estonian the progressive is the construction of the verb *olema* 'to be' and the inessive of the main verb in the *ma*-infinitive, carrying locative, momentary, gradual, or other meanings (Sulkala 1996: 195–196, Metslang 2006: 4–5). The translation corpus shows

some cases of its correspondences with Latvian unprefixed verbs expressing imperfectivity (examples 11 and 12).

5.3.1. *Estonian progressive > Latvian unprefixed verb*

In example 11 the Estonian verbs *õngitsema* 'to fish' and *kõplama* 'to hoe' are used in the progressive expressing imperfectivity, and the latter verb is complemented by the direct object *kooliaed* 'school garden' in the partitive. In the Latvian translation imperfectivity is expressed by the unprefixed verbs *nemakšķerēt* 'not to fish' and *kaplēt* 'to hoe'.

(11) Nad   pole   sugugi   jõesuudmes   õngitsemas   ega
they.NOM not   not_at_all   river_mouth.INE   angle.INF.INE   nor

kooliaeda   kõplamas   /.../ (R, 134)
school_garden.PART   hoe.INF.INE

Viņi   nebūt   nemakšķerē   upes   grīvā,   nedz arī
they.NOM not_at_all   not_fish.PRS.3PL river.GEN   mouth.LOC nor

kaplē   skolas   dārzā,   /.../ (R, 130)
hoe.PST.3PL school.GEN garden.LOC

'They are not at all angling at the river mouth or hoeing the school garden /…/.'

5.3.2. *Latvian unprefixed verb > Estonian progressive*

In example 12 the Latvian unprefixed verb *mest* 'to cast' expresses imperfectivity, which is translated into Estonian with the verb *heitma* 'to cast' in the progressive, complemented by the direct object *varjud* 'shadows' in the partitive plural.

(12) /…/ garās   skropstas   meta   ēnas
        long.DEF.PL.NOM   eyelash.PL.NOM cast.PST.3PL shadow.PL.ACC

        uz brūnajiem   vaigiem.   (E, 20)
        on brown.DEF.PL.DAT cheek.PL.DAT

    /…/ pikad   ripsmed   heitmas   varje
        long.PL.NOM   eyelash.PL.NOM throw.INF.INE   shadow.PL.PART

        pruunidele   põskedele.   (E, 17)
        brown.PL.ALL   cheek.PL.ALL

        '/…/ long eyelashes casting shadows on the brown cheeks.'

The examples suggest that in Estonian the imperfective aspect is expressed by the direct object in the partitive and in Latvian by an unprefixed verb. The Latvian correspondence of the Estonian partitive is also the construction *unprefixed verb + adverb* and vice versa, which emphasizes spatiality. The Latvian correspondence of an Estonian progressive verb is an unprefixed verb and vice versa. It should be mentioned that the Estonian progressive verb was not frequent in the translation corpus. Thus, one can conclude that the progressive is possible in Estonian but is not very common.

6. Conclusion

The aim of the present article was to provide an overview and comparison of the imperfective and perfective aspect in Estonian and Latvian. The analysis focused on transitive verbs, leaving intransitive verbs for further research. The examples for the comparison were taken from the text corpus of Estonian and Latvian literary works (compiled by the authors), and their translations.

Perfectivity in Estonian is primarily expressed by the total object (the direct object in the genitive singular, nominative plural and singular) and imperfectivity by the partial object (partitive). In Latvian the perfective aspect is mainly expressed by 11 verb prefixes (*aiz-*, *ap-*, *at-*, *ie-*, *iz-*, *no-*, *pa-*, *pār-*, *pie-*, *sa-*, *uz-*), which, in addition to perfectivity, may (or may not) change or modify the lexical meaning of the verb on the spatial, quantitative, or qualitative level. In the first examples we can see that perfectivity expressed by the Estonian total object corresponds to a Latvian verb prefix, the same applies for the opposite direction of translation. Additionally, a Latvian verb prefix has in these cases an additional meaning besides perfectivity.

Secondly, perfectivity in Estonian may be expressed by a verb particle (e.g. *ära* – 'away') that either contributes to the total object reflecting perfectivity or is even obligatory in some cases. Comparison of the translations reveals that the meaning of the Estonian verb particle can be expressed by the Latvian verb prefix, which may have an additional meaning (*aiz-* 'closed') or not (*iz-magāt* – 'to wash'), the latter expressing only perfectivity. Estonian verb particles can be translated into Latvian by a prefixed verb with the corresponding adverb. An adverb with a prefixed verb is, however, not considered as part of aspect since a prefixed verb already expresses the perfectivity. Thus, it

can be interpreted as an additional directional marker. Both translation directions show that if a Latvian verb has a prefix, the adverb does not influence the translation – the correspondence is the same as in the case of only a prefixed verb, as the prefix already expresses direction. Both languages use adverbs in parallel.

Imperfectivity is in Estonian expressed by the partial object (the direct object in the partitive, both singular and plural), which depending on the context may express either imperfectivity or perfectivity. In Latvian an unprefixed verb serves as the marker of imperfectivity, which is also observed in both translations. Additionally, imperfectivity can be expressed in Latvian by the construction *unprefixed verb + adverb* where the adverb is synonymous with the corresponding prefix(es). In this construction, the verb prefix is replaced by an adverb with the same meaning expressing imperfectivity. In the Estonian translation, this construction has a partial object. Also, a small number of cases could be found where the Latvian unprefixed verb had the progressive construction as its correspondence in Estonian.

This short study has revealed some parallels, differences, and similarities in the correspondences of the perfective and imperfective opposition in Estonian and Latvian. However, the present study is only an initial introduction to a very broad topic. In future it would be useful to take a much broader perspective (involving intransitive verbs and extended treatment of aspect) and to use more comprehensive research material.

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Abbreviations

1 – first person, 3 – third person, ABL – ablative, ACC – accusative, ALL – allative, DAT – dative, DEF – definitive, F – feminine, FUT – future, GEN – genitive, INE – inessive, INF – infinitive, M – masculine, NOM – nominative, PART – partitive, PL – plural, PREF – prefix, PRS – present, PST – past, PTCP – participle, SG – singular, SUPL – superlative, VP – verb particle

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Kokkuvõte. Ilze Tālberga, Aive Mandel: Imperfektiivsest ja perfektiivsest aspektist eesti ja läti keeles. Artiklis uuritakse imperfektiivse ja perfektiivse aspekti vastandust võrdlevalt eesti ja läti keeles. Selleks kasutatavad näited pärinevad eesti ja läti ilukirjandusteostest ning nende vastastikustest tõlgetest. Käesolevas analüüsis on keskendutud transitiivsetele verbidele, mis nõuavad objekti. Edaspidises uurimistöös loodetakse võtta vaatluse alla ka intransitiivsed verbid. Eesti keeles on keskseks perfektiivsuse markeerimise vahendiks objektikääne. Perfektiivsust väljendab totaalobjekt (ainsuse või mitmuse nominatiiv, ainsuse genitiiv). Läti keeles väljendatakse perfektiivsust esmajoones verbiprefiksite abil, mida on kokku 11 ning mis kõik võivad (aga ei pruugi) lisaks perfektiivsusele anda verbile ka mõne muu (ruumilise, kvantitatiivse või kvalitatiivse) lisatähenduse. Kõrvutasime näitematerjali abil esmalt neid olukordi, kus eesti täisobjekti vasteks on läti keelde tõlkimisel prefiksverb, ning vaatlesime sama olukorda ka vastupidisel tõlkesuunal. Ilukirjandusnäidete põhjal tuleb neist näidetest lisaks perfektiivsuse vastavusele hästi välja ka läti prefiksi lisatähendus. Teiseks toimivad eesti keeles perfektiivsuse väljendamise vahendina ka verbipartiklid (nt *ära*), mis võivad kas aidata totaalobjektis juba kajastuvat perfektiivsust kinnitada või on teatud juhtudel ka obligatoorsed. See mehhanism aitab kompenseerida eesti keeles ajalooliste muutuste tõttu vähem eristuvaks muutunud objektikäänete ebaselgust võrreldes nt soome keelega, kus eesti keelest sagedamini piisab perfektiivsuse väljendamiseks pelgalt objektikäändest. Tõlkekõrvutuste põhjal järeldub, et eesti verbipartiklit saab läti keeles väljendada verbiprefiksiga, milles võib avalduda lisaks perfektiivsusele ka lisatähendus (*aiz*- – 'kinni'). Lisatähendus võib ka puududa (*iz-mazgāt* – 'ära pesema'), viimasel juhul väljendatakse nii partikli kui ka prefiksiga vaid perfektiivsust. Eesti verbipartiklit võidakse aga läti keeles väljendada ka prefiksverbiga, millele lisandub samatähenduslik adverb. Kuna sellist adverbikasutust ei peeta läti keeles aspekti osaks, sest perfektiivsus väljendub juba prefiksis, siis võib neid tõlgendada ruumilist suunda rõhutavatena. Mõlemal tõlkesuunal on näha, et kui prefiksverb on juba olemas, siis sellele läti keeles lisatud adverb eestikeelset vastet ei mõjuta – eesti keeles esineb siis samasugune vaste, nagu oleks adverbita prefiksverbi puhul, kuna ka prefiksverbis on sama ruumilisus juba esindatud. Mõlemad keeled kasutavad siis sel juhul paralleelselt adverbe.

Imperfektiivsust saab eesti keeles väljendada osaobjektiga (partitiiv), mis aga võib sõltuvalt kontekstist kanda ka perfektiivset tähendust. Läti keeles on imperfektiivse tõlgendusega osaobjekti vasteks prefiksita verb, mis ilmneb

mõlemal keelesuunal ka tõlkematerjalis. Lisaks on läti keeles võimalik imper-
fektiivsust väljendada konstruktsiooniga *prefiksita verb + adverb*, milles esinev
adverb on prefiksiga samatähenduslik. Nii on konstruktsioonis perfektiivsust
väljendav prefiks asendatud samasisulise adverbiga, saavutades imperfektiivse
tähenduse. Ka selle konstruktsiooni puhul võib näha tõlkenäidetes eesti vastena
osaobjekti partitiivis, mille tõlkevastena võib omakorda eesti-läti tõlkesuunal
leida osaobjekti. Läti keele imperfektiivsete (prefiksita verb) lausenäidete vas-
tena võib mõnel harval juhul leida eesti keeles ka progressiivtarindi.

Käesolev uurimus tõi perfektiivsuse ja imperfektiivsuse väljendamisel eesti
ja läti keeles välja rea omavahelisi paralleele, erinevusi ja ka sarnasusi. Artik-
kel on mõeldud esmase sissejuhatusena väga laia teemasse, mille käsitlemisel
oleks edaspidi tarvilik nii märksa avaram vaatepunkt (nt kaasata intransitiiv-
sed verbid ja laiendada aspekti käsitlust) kui ka põhjalikum ja mitmekülgsem
uurimismaterjal.

Märksõnad: aspekt, imperfektiivsus, perfektiivsus, verbid, prefiksverbid,
adverbid, läti keel, eesti keel