Compositional and Verbal Aspect in Greek, the
Aorist/Imperfect Distinction and the Article-Aspect Interplay

According to an aspectological model proposed by Kabakčiev in 1984, later developed and sophisticated, languages differ according to whether they mark aspect (perfectivity and imperfectivity) on verbs, as in the Slavic languages – among others, or through nouns/NPs featuring (non-)boundedness which is transferred onto verbs, as in the Germanic languages – among others. In this model of compositional aspect (CA), Bulgarian is a borderline case with a perfective/imperfective and an aorist/imperfect distinction and a definite article only (no indefinite), and the model is used to analyze Greek, a language exhibiting identical features. NP referents play a major role for the compositional explication of aspect. The study finds that Greek is of the same borderline/hybrid type of language as Bulgarian, featuring verbal aspect (VA) predominantly, but also peripherally CA. The aorist/imperfect distinction exists both in Greek and Bulgarian to offset the structural impact of the definite article. Analyzed are some conditions for the explication of CA in Greek and they are found similar to those in Bulgarian. However, there are specificites and differences between the two languages that must be further studied and identified.

Keywords: Definite article, Article-aspect interplay, Boundedness/non-boundedness, Verbal aspect, Compositional aspect, Aorist/Imperfect distinction

Introduction. An Overview of Compositional Aspect

This study takes as an approach to the language data it aims to analyze (mainly from Modern Greek), the theory of CA, as represented in certain publications – some recent (Bulatović 2013; 2019; 2020; Kabakčiev 2019), others long-established (Vendler 1957; Verkuyl 1972; 1993; Kabakčiev 1984; 2000). CA has been known in linguistics as a fundamental and supposedly universal phenomenon for half a century, since Verkuyl (1972), but in spite of its widely recognized significance it has also generated serious theoretical controversies (Kabakčiev 2019). The main goal of this paper is the description of certain CA features of Greek related to the interdependence between the definite article and the aorist/imperfect distinction, proposed a long time ago for Bulgarian but generally ignored in the literature.

In an intricate model of aspect, launched 37 years ago and later developed (Kabakčiev 1984; 2000), the major function across languages of grammatical aspect, including the aorist/imperfect distinction, which is both aspectual and
temporal, is the quantification in temporal terms of participants in situations.\textsuperscript{1} Kabakčiev’s idea of an all-embracing article-aspect interplay is primarily based on Verkuyl’s (1972) model of CA, and Verkuyl’s model was inspired by Vendler’s classification of situations: types of occurrences whose effectuation is made possible by verbs and accompanying elements such as objects and adverbials. The difference between Vendler’s (1957) model and Verkuyl’s is that while Vendler’s is restricted to what separate verbs and verbs with their accompanying elements (objects, adverbials) can do for explicating aspect, in Verkuyl’s (1972) the phenomenon of CA is entirely, with no exception at all, grounded in the whole sentence.

Kabakčiev’s version of the CA theory that we will employ is based on Verkuyl’s (1972) model but departs in some key respects from Verkuyl’s (1993) later atemporal version and encompasses four major theses: (i) the temporality of situation participants (Kabakčiev 2000; 2019: 207-210);\textsuperscript{2} (ii) the mechanism of mapping temporal values in the sentence from nominal referents onto the verb referent – as is generally the case in the Germanic languages, and vice versa, from the verb referent onto the nominal referents – as in the Slavic languages (Kabakčiev 2000: 123-151); (iii) the recognition of two different types of aspect structurally and in cross-language terms (but not semantically) – compositional and verbal. CA is typical of the Germanic languages and located in the sentence; VA is found in the verb and typical of the Slavic languages (Kabakčiev 2019: 212-214). But VA is also represented in English, by the progressive. VA is either a “ready lexical item”, perfective or imperfective, as in Greek and the Slavic languages, or is syntactically realized with the relevant value, as in the progressive in English and the aorist and imperfect in Bulgarian and Greek; (iv) the article (definite and indefinite) in the present model and within the perfective Verkuylian schema (Verkuyl 1972; 1993) is a covert marker of temporal boundedness – on those nominal components that are situation participants, while the zero article is a marker of temporal non-boundedness.

General Notes on the Definite Article and the Aorist/Imperfect Distinction

If the thesis about the article (definite and indefinite) as a marker of temporal boundedness on nouns is valid, it ought to be valid not only for Bulgarian as a borderline language – with VA, an aorist/imperfect distinction and a definite article, but also for Greek, a language with precisely the same features. Kabakčiev fails to mention Greek as a borderline language in his initial publications, but has done it recently (Kabakčiev 2019: 218). We will analyze the relevant data to check if Greek behaves in the same way as

\textsuperscript{1}Participants in situations, also called verb arguments (Verkuyl 1972; 1993), was introduced as a term in Kabakčiev (1984: 670), for being better suited to aspectological research (Kabakčiev 2019: 201).

\textsuperscript{2}Verkuyl’s (1993) aspectual model is atemporal in that it ascribes temporality to referents of verbs only, not to referents of nouns/NPs.
Bulgarian. And if it does, it would have to be classified in the future as belonging to the same structural paradigm and treated as a hybrid language: between the Germanic languages, using predominantly articles for explicating aspect and featuring no VA of the Slavic/Greek type, and the Slavic languages, using predominantly VA and having no articles (with the relevant exception).

The idea of an interdependence between the imperfect and the article in Bulgarian, proposed in 1984, was later rounded off with a similar explanation of the English progressive (Kabakčiev 2000: 163-180). The progressive is described, for the first time in linguistics, as “an expedient for eliminating the temporal boundedness of referents of subject- and object-NPs in sentences belonging to a particular (previously defined) major semantico-syntactic pattern” (Kabakčiev 2000: 180). Thus the raison d’être of the English past progressive partly coincides with that of the Bulgarian imperfect. This is logical, because the Bulgarian imperfect and the English past progressive, though not precisely identical grammemes, have a common value, viz., progressivity (Vendlerian activity), a subtype of imperfectivity. The difference is that while the Bulgarian imperfect encodes situations that are imperfective and are Vendlerian states or activities, the English past progressive also encodes situations that are imperfective but are only activities.

The English Progressive as an Instantiation of VA and the Compositional Explication of Aspect

The compositional explication of perfectivity in English – in both Verkuyl’s and Kabakčiev’s models, takes place at the level of the sentence, through Verkuyl’s perfective schema, as in (1a) below. The referents of subject and object are quantified (bounded) superficially by an article (definite or indefinite). In Kabakčiev’s (1984; 2000) model they constitute temporally bounded entities; they are not atemporal, hence spatial, as in Verkuyl’s (1993) model; the lexical nature of the verb (telic) in (1a) allows the explication of perfectivity. Conversely, imperfectivity in (1b) is not explicated compositionally but is directly expressed by the progressive – an instantiation not of CA but of VA:

(1)  a. The boy threw a stone  
     b. The boy was throwing a stone – when I saw him from the fast moving train

A major tenet in Verkuyl’s (1993) aspectual model is that perfectivity is possible in sentences such as (1a) because there is no leak in any aspect-related

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3A NP referent can be bounded without a superficial marker, e.g., John and he are bounded with a covert article: John means “the person named John”, he is “the person referred to as ‘he’”.

4Grammatical imperfectivity, again verbal (not compositional), is also systematically present in English, realized by the would+inf and used to+inf constructions – which must be regarded as imperfectivity markers (in its habituality variant), not as “habituality markers”, as claimed in English grammars.
component: no leak in the verb and in the NPs that are situation participants. A leak can be represented by a non-quantified NP or by a verb with an atelic lexical meaning, disallowing perfectivity. Sentences (2a,b,c) vs (1a) demonstrate how Verkuylian leaks trigger imperfectivity:\(^5\)

(2) a. The boy threw stones\(_{\text{LEAK}}\)
   b. The boy carried\(_{\text{LEAK}}\) a stone
   c. Boys\(_{\text{LEAK}}\) threw a stone, playing with it around the garden

Sentences such as (1a) demonstrate Verkuyl’s (1993: 328-349) perfective schema, (2a,b,c) – the imperfective one. In the latter, at least one leak is obligatorily present.\(^6\)

Given that sentences such as (1a) are perfective – not always but as a default (Kabakčiev 2019: 205-207), sentences such as (1b), imperfectivized by the progressive, contain such situation participants that could not in any way be temporally bounded as in (1a), despite the subject and the object still being accompanied by an article. The elimination of the temporal boundedness of subject- and object-NP referents in sentences like (1b) and in similar ones containing progressives is effectuated through the mapping mechanism, as part of the model in which CA is “an all-pervading and perpetual process of mapping temporal features between elements of the sentence, especially between referents of verbs and of nominals that are participants in situations” (Kabakčiev 2019: 212). This generalization corresponds to data from languages that are well-studied – Germanic, Slavic,\(^7\) and has stood the test of time.

Also non-bounded temporally are subject and object referents in sentences such as (2a,c) because of the de-quantification of subject or object, triggering a leak. But extremely important questions arise here. If the object in sentences such as (2a) is non-quantified, hence non-bounded – spatially as in Verkuyl’s atemporal model or temporally as in Kabakčiev’s, must the referent of the subject, remaining quantified by an article, be treated as bounded? Analogously, in sentences such as (2c), where the subject is non-quantified, hence non-bounded, must the referent of the object, remaining quantified by an article, be treated as bounded – or as non-bounded? Verkuyl does not propose answers to such questions. His concern is the aspectual interpretation a sentence receives because of the presence/absence of a leak. Kabakčiev’s (2000; 2019) position is different, because of his temporal model, in which all situation participants are temporal entities. When a non-quantified subject coerces a perfective sentence into imperfectivity, as in (1a)>(2c), the referent of the object also undergoes a change, becoming temporally non-bounded,

\(^5\)The leaks are called Verkuylian in honor of their finder (Kabakčiev 2019: 204).

\(^6\)The perfective schema also demonstrates the so-called plus-principle: all sentence components must have plus-values (Verkuyl 1993: 5-32).

\(^7\)Finnish, a language structurally completely different from most other European languages, entirely falls within the described paradigm, belonging to languages with nominal aspect (Kabakčiev 2019: 218). It features no VA and no articles but its markers of temporal boundedness are also located on nouns. The encoding of boundedness is executed by the nominative/accusative case contrast. While the marker of non-boundedness in languages like English is the zero article, in Finnish it is the partitive case.
Despite remaining superficially quantified. Analogously, when a non-quantified object coheres a perfective sentence into imperfectivity, as in (1a)→(2a), the referent of the subject becomes temporally non-bounded, despite remaining superficially quantified (Kabakčiev 2019).³

On the Interplay between the Definite Article and the Imperfect in Bulgarian

In the analysis of the article and the imperfect in Bulgarian along the lines above, the following question arises: what would happen if Bulgarian had only one preterit verb form, like the other Slavic languages? Here are some Bulgarian sentences (from Kabakčiev 1984: 655) – impossible to translate, hence only glossed, to exemplify the issue:

(3) a. Mehanikat popravi/popravyasheIMPVF*AOR/IMP kolata
    Mechanic-the repaired car-the
b. Vojnikat presicha/presichasheIMPVF*AOR/IMP ulitsata
    Soldier-the crossed street-the
c. Zhenata chisti/chistesheIMPVF*AOR/IMP stajata
    Woman-the cleaned room-the
d. Turistat izkachva/izkachvasheIMPVF*AOR/IMP varha
    Tourist-the climbed peak-the

These are not real sentences but constructs containing a hypothetical single imperfective verb form common for aorist and imperfect. They resemble the preterit in English – which allows the explication of any aspectual meaning: the preterit is “an empty bag” capable of accommodating various aspectological meanings arising in sentences/contexts (Kabakčiev 2017: 232). If the verb in a hypothetical Bulgarian sentence as in (3) is unmarked for aorist or imperfect (because it represents a construct common for the two grammemes), there will be a tendency for such sentences with subjects and objects with a definite article, containing temporally bounded participants, to signal perfectivity, i.e., temporal boundedness. Hence, the Bulgarian imperfect exists to eliminate the temporal boundedness that would be triggered in the relevant nominal(s) in such sentences if the Bulgarian language had no imperfect grammeme (Kabakčiev 1984). The temporal boundedness of such NP referents would then be transferred onto the verb referent, coercing it into perfectivity, while the intention of the speaker could be to present it as imperfactive.

Note that the sentences in (3) belong to an important semantico-syntactic pattern widely found across languages. The subject is an entity executing an

³Such a solution is impossible to achieve in an atemporal model in which situation participants are spatial entities. Cf. Krifka’s (1992: 44) observation that there may be a correspondence between a book and its reading to the end, but there is no correspondence between parts of the person reading and the reading event. In a temporal model with situation participants that are temporal entities (Kabakčiev 2019: 214-215), such a problem simply does not exist.
action directed at another entity and triggering a pragmatic result. The cross-
language existence of this pattern is a fundamental notion in both Verkuyl’s
and Kabakčiev’s models. The sidestepping of its existence and high prevalence
has recently been criticized by Bulatović (2020): “the strong focus on internal
arguments has overshadowed the role of external arguments in the calculation
of aspect”.

Similar Conceptions of the Article-Aspect Interplay in Synchrony and
Diachrony

Some recent publications (Bulatović 2019; 2020; Abraham 2020: 5) endorse Verkuyl’s and Kabakčiev’s aspectual models with their explanation of
English aspect as predominantly compositional and involving an interplay
between verbal and nominal elements, vis-à-vis Slavic aspect, predominantly
verbal. Bulatović insists that CA and the article-aspect interplay as part of it are
phenomena that are so important that they must be taught to all learners of
English, not only Slavic learners. They are so important that they must be
included in all English grammars, hence become part of the knowledge of
native speakers (Bulatović 2019; 2020). Some years earlier Bulatović (2013;
65) had argued that works by Vendler (1957), Verkuyl (1972; 1993) and
Kabakčiev (2000) are “the cornerstones of what is known today as
compositional aspect” and that the description of the English tense system must
include lexical aspect, VA and the principles of CA (Bulatović 2013: 77-78). In
our view, Bulatović’s suggestions must not only be applied to English and
similar languages, they are relevant for hybrid languages like Bulgarian and
Greek too, manifesting primarily VA, but also CA (to be demonstrated below).

There is an interesting circumstance in the literature regarding the presence
in languages of a definite article only. In the year of publication of Kabakčiev’s
(2000) monograph on aspect, another monograph appeared (Leiss 2000),
containing similar claims but from a diachronic point of view. Leiss
conjectured that the demise of a grammeme in a language may lead to the
emergence of another. In her detailed account of the development of three
Proto-Germanic languages – Old Icelandic, Gothic and Old High German,
Leiss discovered an interplay in each between the disappearance of
perfectivity, represented by perfective verbs, and the emergence of a definite
article in nominals associated with verbs that are (or were formerly) perfective.
In other words, two authors independently of one another launched the idea
that articles and aspect are interdependent, corroborating the idea of an all-
embracing article-aspect interplay: across languages different in their
grammatical structures and across millenia – synchronically and diachronically.
Leiss explains the article-aspect interplay in diachrony, Kabakčiev’s analysis is
synchronous, with insights into the cognitive mechanisms of aspect. The authors
recognized each others’ works as complementary. Abraham and Leiss (2012:
326) point to Kabakčiev (1984; 2000) as the first researcher to establish that
“languages develop either a category of aspect or an article system”;
Kabakčiev (2018) described Leiss’ (2000) work as “an extremely insightful theory of the rise of the definite article in parallel with the demise of verbal aspect in Old Germanic” and the two researchers’ conclusions as “a common theory of the aspect-article interplay” (Kabakčiev 2019: 216).

**Our Overview and Critique of the Literature on Greek Aspect vs Germanic/Slavic**

Greek and Bulgarian belong to different groups (Hellenic and Slavic) of the Indo-European ancestry. But, located in the Balkansprachbund, they share many common features: phonological, lexical, grammatical, etc., due to the centuries of physical proximity of the two nations and the unavoidable mutual influence. Unfortunately, although considerable research has been done on the Balkansprachbund and on Greek and Bulgarian separately, many of their characteristics remain understudied. VA, the aorist/imperfect distinction and the definite article are among them, in the sense that these features are, of course, well-known but their interdependence remains unconfirmed. With this study we aim to correct the deficiency.9

Greek has VA, just like the Slavic languages. Slavic aspectology has a huge tradition but publications on Greek aspect in Slavicist terms are rare (e.g., Tarpomanova 2013; Dimitrova 2019a; 2019b); some offer mixed approaches, Germanic-Slavic (Bielecki, Trąba 2018; Trąba 2019). Unfortunately, despite the widely acknowledged thesis that CA is not VP-based but sentence-based (Verkuyl 1972; 1993; Dowty 1979: 64; Kabakčiev 2000; Bulatović 2019; 2020), the idea that CA lies within the VP continues, surprisingly, to hold sway in many Greek studies. Common assertions are that it represents “conceptual properties of situation types denoted by whole VPs” (Horrocks and Stavrou 2007: 637) and that it is expressed “by the predicate” (Andreou and Tsimpli 2017: 307). Extreme views are even upheld: “-ed designates perfectivity” (Dosi 2017: 215) – which means that English aspect is not even VP-based but verb-based. Dosi et al (2017: 77) argue that sentences with non-quantified objects such as *Mary ate apples* denote perfectivity. This is in contradiction to Vendler’s aspect – which the authors call “lexical” (Dosi et al 2017: 79). Vendler’s model rests on the idea that *eat an apple/the apple* are perfective phrases, while *ate apples* is an imperfective one. How the phrase *ate apples* can be perfective and why Vendler’s aspect is called lexical remains unclear.10

Other authors blend VA and CA into one: “aspectual composition occurs when

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9The problem of the historical development of the definite article in Bulgarian and Greek will not be handled because of the insufficiency of research and historical evidence. For example, the emergence of the Bulgarian article is hypothesized to have taken place somewhere between the 10th and the 17th century.

10Vendler’s aspect could be called lexical when the difference between achievements (arrive) and states (hate) is discussed. When differences between *eat an apple* (accomplishment) and *eat apples* (state/activity) are at issue, for Vendler’s aspect to be called lexical is tantamount to claiming that what changes the accomplishment *ate an apple* into a state/activity in *ate apples* is the lexical meaning of *apples*. 
grammatical aspect [...] and eventuality types [...] carried by the verb along with its arguments combine” (Flouraki 2006).\(^{11}\) Georgakopoulos et al (2019) rightly assume that Greek is an aspect language while English and German are not, yet the latter are capable of explicating perfectivity – but no explanation is offered on how this is achieved. Sioupi (2005) claims a Germanic-Slavic approach to Greek aspect, naming Russian as a point of contrast. But no Slavic analysis is undertaken, not a single Slavic example is given. The approach is, therefore, purely Germanic, not a problem in itself. But, unfortunately, the sentence-level nature of CA is bypassed.

As for the view that the English preterit is perfective (Dosi 2017), considered obsolete in today’s aspectology, it can, indeed, still be found in isolated papers and in some English grammars. The reason? English grammars have been lagging behind modern aspectological research for many decades. Bulatović (2020) has just poured some harsh yet fully justified criticism on almost all English grammars for their total failure to describe the article-aspect interplay and CA in general. English grammars have, indeed, been changing lately, but very slowly. A decade or two ago some grammarians started to admit that perfectivity is found systematically in English (Huddleston and Pullum 2002: 118-125; Declerck et al 2006: 28-34). Others included Vendler’s classes in their descriptions (Downing 2006) or mentioned in passing the existence of perfectivity (Fenn 2010: 279-280).\(^{12}\) But the necessary radical restructuring of the aspect-tense sphere in English grammars is obviously a long way ahead.

Publications on Greek claiming to use CA as an analytical tool systematically sidestep the role played by all referents of situation participant NPs in a sentence. A certain exception is Traba (2019: 42), who mentions the contribution of subject NPs for aspectual composition but restricts himself to “quantitative properties”, bypassing the issue of how exactly arguments explicate aspect. Another publication discussing the impact of both subject and object in aspectual construal is Tsimpli and Papadopoulou (2006: 1596) – but it, too, does not explain how their features interact to produce an aspectual value. Kaltsa (2012: xiv) declares aspect to be sentence-based, but the contribution of subject NPs to aspect is ignored in this dissertation – aiming to describe verbal aspect in Greek through a mixed approach, verbal-compositional. In our view, endeavors blending VA and CA are doomed to fail when no principled distinction is made between these two types of aspect.\(^{13}\)

This overview of research on Greek aspect shows that its general line is incompatible with our approach, because: (i) VA and CA are two distinct phenomena – structurally and in cross-language terms; (ii) CA is a sentence-

\(^{11}\)CA and VA are structurally different phenomena that must be kept apart for a true understanding of the universal nature of aspect (Kabakčiev 2000; 2019: 212-214).

\(^{12}\)Kabakčiev (2017) is the only English grammar providing an exhaustive description of CA and the article-aspect interplay, as pointed out in three reviews (Bulatović 2018; 2020; Dimitrova 2019e).

\(^{13}\)Blending VA and CA is a mistake made by Borer (2005) and Borik (2006), demonstrated in Kabakčiev (2019: 212-214).
level phenomenon, with no exception at all; (iii) situation participants are
temporal entities playing a decisive role in CA construal.

CA in Bulgarian, Biaspectuality and Its Disambiguation

While CA on Greek data has been frequently misconstrued as VP-based
instead of sentence-based, this has not been the case on Bulgarian data. The
relevant biaspectuality phenomenon in Bulgarian has been discussed since the
1980s (Kabakčiev 1984) and CA has been treated as involving both subject and
object(s). The interplay between biaspectuality and the article is demonstrated
in Kabakčiev (1984: 649) by the following perfective (4a) and imperfective
(4b,c,d) sentences:

(4) a. Mehanitsite remontirahaBIASPAOR/IMP kolata
   ‘The mechanics repaired the car’
   b. Mehanitsite remontirahaBIASPAOR/IMP koli_LEAK
   ‘The mechanics repaired cars’
   c. Mehanitsi_LEAK remontirahaBIASPAOR/IMP kolata
   ‘Mechanics repaired the car’
   d. Mehanitsi_LEAK remontirahaBIASPAOR/IMP koli_LEAK
   ‘Mechanics repaired cars’

A sentence such as (4a) is perfective only as a default, just like its English
equivalent. The definite article in the subject- and object-NP triggers temporal
boundedness in them and this temporal boundedness from both is simultaneously
transferred onto the referent of the verb. This is possible because the verb form
is biaspectral, i.e., ambivalent between perfectivity and imperfectivity. In a
non-default reading this sentence could explicate imperfectivity, but a special
context is required: Mehanitsite remontiraha kolata, v tova vreme sobstvenikat
speshe ‘The mechanics were repairing the car, meanwhile the owner was
sleeping’. It is worth noting that formally, in terms of CA rules (de-quantified
subject), sentence (4c) appears imperfective. In real-world terms, however, it is
ambiguous between perfectivity-imperfectivity – and can be perfective if by
mehanitsi ‘mechanics’ “some mechanics” is meant, as in English. In principle,
Verkuylian leaks trigger imperfectivity, as in (4b,c,d). But the ambiguity of
(4c), i.e., the breaking of CA rules, is due to the “knowledge of the world”
factor.15

There are various semantico-syntactic patterns in Bulgarian explicating
perfectivity and imperfectivity compositionally, i.e., not through an aspectually
marked verb but otherwise (Kabakčiev 2000: 52-53). A well-known one is the
use of a verb like imam ‘have’ (traditionally considered to be imperfective)
when used with a nominal signaling boundedness through its lexical semantics:
imam uspeh/uslozhitie/neblagorazumieto ‘have success/a complication/the

14 When aspect is interpreted as VP-based, it is actually Vendlerian, not compositional.
15 Pragmatic factors often impact aspectual construal (see Kabakčiev 2000: 323-324).
imprudence’. The referent of the nominal transfers its temporal boundedness onto the referent of *imam* ‘have’ – which shows that *imam* should rather be regarded as a biaspectual verb. The *have*+NP collocation will be demonstrated below on Greek, Bulgarian and English data. Consider here the Bulgarian phenomenon (examples from Kabakčiev, forthcoming):

(5)  

a. *Sled dvuboya mezhdu dvamata grosmaystori trima mladi shahmatisti imaho\textsubscript{BIASP} vazmozhnostta da pogovoryat\textsubscript{PFV} s tyah*

‘After the chess game between the two grandmasters, three young chess players had the opportunity to talk to them’

b. *Sled vseki dvuboy mezhdou dvamata grosmaystori mladi shahmatisti imaho\textsubscript{BIASP} vazmozhnostta da razgovaryat\textsubscript{IMP} s tyah*

‘After every chess game between the two grandmasters, young chess players had the opportunity to talk to them’

Each of these sentences contains *imaho\textsubscript{BIASP} vazmozhnostta* ‘had the opportunity’, an imperfective phrase at first sight, i.e., if *imam* ‘have’ is treated as an imperfective verb. The two sentences differ dramatically, however. The aspectual value of the phrase is perfective in (5a), in (5b) it is imperfective. Why? In (5a) it is perfective because: (i) the adverbial *sled dvuboya* ‘after the game’ indicates that what follows is a single completed event; (ii) the *have-*phrase allows the explication of perfectivity despite the alleged imperfectivity of *imam* – which shows that this verb is, actually, biaspectual (Lindstedt 1985: 185-186); (iii) the NP *trima mladi shahmatisti* ‘three young chess players’ is quantified, hence temporally bounded, capable of mapping its boundedness onto the referent of the verb. Conversely, (5b) is imperfective, because: (i) the adverbial *sled vseki dvuboy* ‘after every game’ indicates that what follows is an iterative, non-bounded situation; (ii) the phrase *imaho\textsubscript{BIASP} vazmozhnostta* ‘had the opportunity’ allows the explication of imperfectivity – see above; (iii) the bare NP *mladi shahmatisti* ‘young chess players’ is non-quantified, hence temporally non-bounded; indicating re-occurrence of chess players, hence non-boundedness is mapped onto the referent of the *imaha*-phrase. The phrase *imaho\textsubscript{BIASP} vazmozhnostta* ‘had the opportunity’ in (6a) is equal to, and can be substituted by, one with a perfective verb, *poluchih\textsubscript{PFV} vazmozhnostta* ‘received the opportunity’, while the same phrase in (5b) is equal to, and can be substituted by, one with an imperfective verb – *poluchavaha\textsubscript{IMP} vazmozhnostta* ‘received [repeatedly] the opportunity’.

These regularities are confirmed by using the imperfective phrase *poluchavaha\textsubscript{IMP} vazmozhnostta* ‘received [repeatedly] the opportunity’ in (5a) instead of the biaspectual *imaho\textsubscript{BIASP} vazmozhnostta* ‘had the opportunity’.

A non-grammatical sentence obtains – (6a). If the perfective *poluchih\textsubscript{PFV} vazmozhnostta* ‘received\textsubscript{PFV} the opportunity’ is used in (5b) instead of the biaspectual phrase, non-grammaticality obtains again, (6b):

(6)  

a. *Sled dvuboya mezhdu dvamata grosmaystori trima mladi shahmatisti poluchavaha\textsubscript{IMP} vazmozhnostta da razgovoryat\textsubscript{IMP} s tyah*
‘After the chess game between the two grandmasters, three young chess players received the opportunity to talk to them’

b. *Sled vseki dvuboy mezhdu dvamata grosmaystori mladi shahmatisti poluchihapFV vazmoznoystta da razgovaryatIMPFV s tyah

‘After every chess game between the two grandmasters, young chess players received the opportunity to talk to them’

Let us now analyze sentences with two syntactic objects. In his two monographs on CA Verkuyl (1972; 1993) uses very few such sentences, among which Den Uyl gave the Labor Party badge to a congress-goer, to exemplify how almost every verb argument can alter the aspectual interpretation. Sentences of this type are rare to encounter and difficult to construct. Here is a Bulgarian one (from Kabakčiev forthcoming), where the use of a biaspectual verb allows each of the three NPs to coerce the perfective (7a), compositionally obtained, into imperfectivity by introducing a Verkuylian leak (de-quantification), cf. (7b,c,d):

(7) a. Dvama planinari konvoirahaBIASP konya da pie ot blizkata reka ‘Two mountaineers convoyed the horse to drink from the nearby river’

b. Dvama planinari konvoirahaBIASP konLEAK da piyat ot blizkata reka ‘Two mountaineers convoyed horses to drink from the nearby river’

c. Dvama planinari konvoirahaBIASP konya da pie ot blizki rekaLEAK ‘Two mountaineers convoyed the horse to drink from nearby rivers’

d. PlaninariLEAK konvoirahaBIASP konya da pie ot blizkata reka ‘Mountaineers convoyed the horse to drink from the nearby river’

The English translation equivalents here also demonstrate how crucial are the theoretical considerations defining CA as sentence-based, not VP-based. If CA were VP-based, the generalization concerning (5), (6) and (7) would be virtually impossible, along with those in (3) concerning the interdependence between the article and the aorist/imperfect contrast in Bulgarian. Seven decades ago, Vendler (1957) found that an object-NP can alter the aspectual reading of a verb through the quantified/non-quantified interplay. It was Verkuyl’s (1972) epochal discovery of CA that ultimately showed that aspect can never be properly understood without recognizing the impact of all sentence components on aspect, including the subject, as here in (7d). The grandeur of Verkuyl’s discovery now becomes even more manifest after the realization that CA exists even in languages with verbal aspect like Bulgarian.

Let us now check out Greek in this respect.

CA in Greek, Biaspectuality and its Disambiguation

Greek is an aspect language, i.e., featuring VA like Bulgarian and all the other Slavic languages. The perfective/imperfective contrast is signalled by the presence/absence of an -s- morpheme (sigmatic/asiomatic), and the
imperfective stem is the default one (Xydopoulos 1996: 127). In other words, in the huge majority of cases Greek aspect is directly expressed by the verb form (Holton and Philippaki-Warburton 1997: 130ff; Kitis and Tsangalidis 2005: 144-145; Tarpomanova 2013; Babiniotis and Chleris 2015: 190; Dimitrova 2019a; Dimitrova 2019b: 185). However, as Xydopoulos (1996: 127) puts it, the pattern is not fully systematic and “the aspectual opposition is often obtained by idiosyncratic morphophonemic changes with or without the -s morpheme”. Hence, aspectual values in Greek are distinguished in many cases in contexts only; to give an example from Aubrey (2014: 201), “due to the nasal assimilation of the perfective suffix -s there is no way to distinguish krineíPFV ‘he will judge’ from krineíIMPFV ‘he is judging/judges’”.

The phenomenon of having a grammatically marked aspectual verb form in Greek used with the opposite aspectual value in a sentence/context is discussed at length in Kitis and Tsangalidis (2005: 146-153), perfective events can be described using verbs marked for imperfectivity as in their example (8a). But, as noted by the authors themselves, here it is a stylistic effect rather than true aspectual coercion. It is common in Bulgarian too, cf. (8b):

(8) a. Ótan ton skótosaPFV pethanáIMPFV mazi tou
‘When I killed him I died with him’
b. UbivamIMPFV go, i njama da mi mignePFV okoto
‘(lit.) I kill him and my eye won’t blink’

The opposite phenomenon, perfective forms used imperfectively (iteratively), is also not infrequent in Bulgarian, as in (9b), as an answer to (9a):

(9) a. Kak se pribira Ivan vkashti piyan?
‘How does Ivan go home drunk?’
b. PadnePFV, stanePFV
‘Falls, rises’

In any case, aspectual verb forms in Greek and Bulgarian can effectuate the opposite aspectual value, and this phenomenon seems to be more frequent in Greek (see below).

What is important is that aspect in Greek can indeed be explicited, albeit peripherally, relatively rarely, in context (according to the traditional formulation) when biaspectual verbs are used, just like in the Slavic languages (Tarpomanova 2013: 191; Dimitrova 2019b: 185). Many examples were given above of Bulgarian sentences containing aspectually ambivalent verbs with which aspect is explicited compositionally. The question is, when Greek is to be considered, where are the main possibilities for CA explication with ambivalent verb forms? Perhaps among the first to spring to mind is the verb écho ‘I have’, especially in the preterit, étcha ‘I had’. As Holton and Philippaki-Warburton (1997: 132) put it, écho ‘I have’ has no perfective forms. This means

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2 imperfective stem is the default one (Xydopoulos 1996: 127). In other words,
3 in the huge majority of cases Greek aspect is directly expressed by the verb
4 form (Holton and Philippaki-Warburton 1997: 130ff; Kitis and Tsangalidis
5 2005: 144-145; Tarpomanova 2013; Babiniotis and Chleris 2015: 190;
6 Dimitrova 2019a; Dimitrova 2019b: 185). However, as Xydopoulos (1996:
7 127) puts it, the pattern is not fully systematic and “the aspectual opposition is
8 often obtained by idiosyncratic morphophonemic changes with or without
9 the -s morpheme”. Hence, aspectual values in Greek are distinguished in many
10 cases in contexts only; to give an example from Aubrey (2014: 201), “due to
11 the nasal assimilation of the perfective suffix -s there is no way to distinguish
12 krineíPFV ‘he will judge’ from krineíIMPFV ‘he is judging/judges’”.

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13 in Greek used with the opposite aspectual value in a sentence/context is
14 discussed at length in Kitis and Tsangalidis (2005: 146-153), perfective events
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21 in Greek (see below).

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22 peripherally, relatively rarely, in context (according to the traditional
23 formulation) when biaspectual verbs are used, just like in the Slavic languages
24 (Tarpomanova 2013: 191; Dimitrova 2019b: 185). Many examples were given
25 above of Bulgarian sentences containing aspectually ambivalent verbs with
26 which aspect is explicited compositionally. The question is, when Greek is to
27 be considered, where are the main possibilities for CA explication with
28 ambivalent verb forms? Perhaps among the first to spring to mind is the verb
29 écho ‘I have’, especially in the preterit, étcha ‘I had’. As Holton and Philippaki-
30 Warburton (1997: 132) put it, écho ‘I have’ has no perfective forms. This means

12
that if it is found to explicate perfectivity, it must be regarded as biaspectual (aspectually ambivalent).

As a light verb *have* combines with many nominals signifying temporal entities. Some of them are temporally bounded as lexical entries, some temporally non-bounded. The lexical nature of English abstract nominals denoting temporal entities, as well as its relation to the bounded/non-bounded contrast is described in detail in Kabakčiev (2000: 211-239). We can safely maintain here that the lexical nature of nominals signifying temporal entities is not only near-identical in Bulgarian and Greek but it is also fairly similar to the one observed in English.¹⁶

Compare the tables below with nominals outside sentences, as lexical entities, in the three languages discussed. The nominals in Table 1 denote bounded situations, Vendlerian accomplishments and achievements. Such nominals in English are typically accompanied by an indefinite article – the indefinite article explicates boundedness (specified quantity) in NP referents in Verkuyl’s (1972; 1993) model, and temporal boundedness in Kabakčiev’s (1984; 2000; 2019) model.

In Greek and Bulgarian, an indefinite numeral, sometimes called an indefinite article (ένα in éna párti ‘one party’ in Greek, edna sreshta ‘one meeting’ in Bulgarian) may be needed to strengthen the lexically contained temporal boundedness, but this issue will not be discussed here, for lack of space.

### Table 1. Nominals as lexical entries signifying *bounded situations* (Vendlerian accomplishments and achievements)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Bulgarian</th>
<th>Greek</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a fall</td>
<td>padane ‘a fall’</td>
<td>ptósi ‘a fall’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a surgery/an</td>
<td>operatsiya ‘a surgery’</td>
<td>epémvasi ‘a surgery’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>operation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a talk/a</td>
<td>razgovor ‘a talk’</td>
<td>syzítisi ‘a talk’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conversation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a meeting</td>
<td>sreshta ‘a meeting’</td>
<td>synántist ‘a meeting’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a party</td>
<td>parti ‘a party’</td>
<td>párti ‘a party’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The nominals in Table 2 signify non-bounded situations as lexical entries (Vendlerian states and activities). In English they are typically used without an indefinite article.

### Table 2. Nominals as lexical entries signifying *non-bounded situations* (Vendlerian states and activities)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Bulgarian</th>
<th>Greek</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>imagination</td>
<td>vaobrazhenie ‘imagination’</td>
<td>fantasía ‘imagination’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>understanding</td>
<td>razbirane ‘understanding’</td>
<td>katanóisi ‘understanding’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pressure</td>
<td>natisk ‘pressure’</td>
<td>píesi ‘pressure’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>belief</td>
<td>vyara ‘belief’</td>
<td>písti ‘belief’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>love/hate</td>
<td>lyubov/omraza ‘love/hate’</td>
<td>agápi/mísos ‘love/hate’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹⁶The Bulgarian system of nominals featuring temporal boundedness and non-boundedness is described in detail in Kabakčiev (1999).
The two tables demonstrate that English, Bulgarian and Greek are fairly similar in this area. Sentences in all the three languages with biaspectual have/had + a temporally bounded or non-bounded nominal display the mechanism of mapping temporal values from the (referent of the) nominal onto the (referent of the) aspectually ambivalent verb. In (10) the relevant nominals in Greek and in English map their temporal boundedness onto the verb, whereby the have-forms acquire perfectivity.

(10) a. …kai den íthele se kamía períptosi na échei ptósi me énan kainoúrio kinitíra
   a’. …and he never wanted to have a fall with a new engine’
   b. …kalýtera min kánete kápoia kínisi, físo kai na échei apotychía
   b’. …better not make any move, it may fail [have a failure’]
   c. Boreí na écheiBIASP epistrofí apo Santoríni ap’eftheías
   c’. It can be returned [have a return] from Santorini directly
   d. O Jacques proévi se diávima pros ton Morel, prokeiménou na échei
   d’. Jacques took a step towards Morel, in order to have a discussion
   with the latter’
   e. O Karypídis anaménetai na échei synántisi me ton Mántzio
   e’. Karypidis is expected to have a meeting with Mantzio’

Conversely, the have-forms in (11) in both languages acquire imperfectivity after the lexical non-boundedness of the object-NP is mapped from the (referent of the) nominal onto the (referent of the) verb – but see also below about the subject-NP:

(11) a. O Tzon éícheBIASP fantasía
   a’. John had imagination
   b. O Tzon éícheBIASP písti stin anthropótita
   b’. John had belief in humanity
   c. O Tzon éícheBIASP písei stin koiliá tou
   c’. John had pressure in his abdomen
   d. As échoumeBIASP katanóisi gia tous állous
   d’. Let us have understanding for others

As already mentioned, non-bounded nominals as lexical entries in (11) do not require the use of an indefinite article in English or an indefinite numeral in Greek. Conversely, bounded nominals as lexical entries do require, in most cases, the use of the indefinite article in English, see Table 1. It can be argued that while the boundedness of the relevant nominal (a fall, a refund, a talk, a party) does reside in the lexical meaning, the indefinite article is still needed to explicate temporal boundedness (Kabakčiev 2000: 211ff). Of course, the relevant temporally bounded or non-bounded nominal in all the three languages

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17These sentences are extracted from the Internet.
can combine not only with have but with other (light) verbs too: receive a refund instead of have a refund, feel pressure instead of have pressure, etc. But other light verbs besides have are not considered here because they are marked for aspect in the preterit in Greek, and we are interested in cases of biaspectuality only.

Analyzing (10), one might adopt the idea that it is solely the temporal boundedness in the nominal as a lexical item that triggers perfectivity in the relevant aspectually unmarked have-form. This is not the case for the following reasons. First, subjects such as personal pronouns or proper names are temporally bounded by default. They contain a covert definite article, see Footnote 3, and this temporal boundedness is mapped from them onto the (referent of the) have-verb. Second, let us construct some English sentences with bare-NP subjects and objects and analyze their Greek correspondences.

English (12a) equals Greek (12a'), English (12b) equals Greek (12b'):

(12) a. In this study patients had an operation that restricted food intake
b. Patients had an immediate refund for defective devices

These sentences invariably explicate imperfectivity in the have-phrases in English and Greek, and the Greek sentences represent perfect examples of the functionality of Verkuyl’s imperfective schema in Greek, otherwise a VA language. Note carefully that if used independently or with a bounded subject as in (10), the have-phrases are perfective. Temporal boundedness is explicated by the nominal and mapped onto the referent of the aspectually unmarked have-form. What happens in (12) is that the imperfectivity of each have-phrase is explicated according to Verkuyl’s imperfective schema in the following way. The temporal non-boundedness of the (referents of the) relevant bare-NPs (patients, food intake, customers, defective devices, astheneis ‘patients’, epémvasi ‘surgery’) is simultaneously mapped onto the referents of the verbs in the have-phrases. The boundedness of the relevant NPs (an operation, a refund, epémvasi ‘operation’, epistrofi ‘return’) is thus canceled, and an indefinitely iterativized entity is produced, despite the presence of an indefinite article in English – and in one case in Greek, mia epémvasi ‘an operation’.

Let us now use the Bulgarian sentences in (5) with the biaspectral verb imamBiasp ‘have’ to analyze their Greek correspondences. The case is especially interesting because opportunity – in all the three languages discussed, is – unlike the nominals in Tables 1,2 above – ambivalent with respect to (non-)boundedness. It can signal both.
a. After the game between the two grandmasters, three young chess players had the opportunity to talk to them.

b. After each game between the two grandmasters, three young chess players had the opportunity to talk to them.

In (13a,b) the verb after the aspectually ambivalent phrase _eíchan_BIASP_ _tin efkairía_ ‘had the opportunity’ is marked by the perfective stem _milíso_ ‘talk’. However, _eíchan_BIASP_ _tin efkairía_ ‘had the opportunity’ is perfective in (13a), obtained compositionally in Verkuyl’s perfective schema, and the grammatically perfective _na milíso_PVF_ ‘to talk’ corresponds to the compositionally obtained perfectivity of _eíchan_BIASP_ _tin efkairía_ ‘had the opportunity’. In (13b) _na milíso_PVF_ ‘to talk’ is, interestingly, imperfective in essence, signaling non-bounded iterativity, despite being grammatically marked as perfective. This example is opposite to the one given by Kitis and Tsangalidis (2005: 146-153), (8a) above, and there is real aspectual coercion in (13b), not a stylistic figure. Sentence (13b) is a good example of how a grammatically marked aspectual value in Greek can be coerced into the opposite one, in this case by a compositionally derived aspectual value.

The phenomenon is also observed in Bulgarian. In (5a) above the perfective _da pogovorya_PVF_ ‘to talk’ matches the compositionally obtained perfectivity of _imah_BIASP_ _vazmozhnost’a_, and the compositionally obtained imperfectivity of _imah_BIASP_ _vazmozhnost’a_ in (5b) needs to be matched with an imperfective verb form, _da razgovaryat_ _IMPFV_ ‘to talk’. The use of perfective _da pogovorya_PVF_ in (14b) is not non-grammatical but is felt to be slightly unacceptable:

Let us now have Greek sentences similar to the Bulgarian ones in (7) above, with an aspectually ambivalent (biaspectral) verb, _parkárei_ ‘park’, and three situation participant NPs, each of which can change the aspect of the initial perfective sentence, rendering it imperfective. As already mentioned, these sentences are rare, difficult to encounter or construct.

Sentence (15a) is perfective, belonging to Verkuyl’s perfective schema. The other three are imperfective, each imperfectivized by a de-quantified (bare) NP constituting a Verkuylian leak. Note, however, that while the otherwise similar Bulgarian sentences (7) with three situation participants each
capable of changing the aspectual value of the verb are in the preterit, preterit forms cannot be used in Greek (except with eícha ‘I had’ discussed above), because Greek biaspectral verbs are formed from a perfective stem in the aorist and a biaspectral verb in the preterit receives aspectual marking. Other conditions are therefore needed for a biaspectral verb to be aspectually ambivalent. Among the forms meeting this requirement are future tense verb forms. The aspectual value in all the sentences in (15) is obtained through Verkuyl’s two schemata, i.e., according to the general CA mechanism:

(15) a. O valé tha parkárei_{BIASP} to aftokínitó mas ston kontinó chóro státhmefsis
    ‘The valet will park our car in the parking lot nearby’
    b. O valé tha parkárei_{BIASP} aftokínitá_{LEAK} ston kontinó chóro státhmefsis
    ‘The valet will park cars in the parking lot nearby’
    c. O valé tha parkárei_{BIASP} to aftokínitó mas se kontinóus chórous státhmefsis_{LEAK}
    ‘The valet will park our car in nearby parking lots’
    d. Valédes_{LEAK} tha parkároun_{BIASP} to aftokínitó mas ston kontinó chóro státhmefsis
    ‘Valets will park our car in the nearby parking lot’

If the Bulgarian correspondences of Greek (15) are added here, it will be seen that they are fully equivalent lexically and syntactically, so we need not waste space for this. More importantly, the generalization that befits the cross-language and obviously universal picture thus obtained is: albeit peripherally, both Greece and Bulgarian, otherwise languages with VA, also feature CA. This generalization corroborates a statement put forward a long time ago (Kabakčiev 1984; 2000) and reiterated recently: “Verkuyl’s theory [of CA] is a gigantic breakthrough in linguistics and its explanatory power is enormous” (Kabakčiev 2019: 213).

As already demonstrated, while Bulgarian provides ample opportunities for observing the behavior of biaspectral verbs in the preterit, the Greek preterit is a constraint: biaspectral verbs lose their biaspectrality there. For this reason, Bulgarian sentences in the past that demonstrate biaspectrality must be re-constructed in the Greek future tense for biaspectrality to be demonstrated. This was done above, in (15). In a recent study of non-past na-clauses in Greek from the point of view of aspect and tense, Fiotaki and Lekakou (2018) argue that while most verbs (including na thélo ‘to want’) allow the effectuation of perfectivity in the na-clause, there are some (e.g., vlepo ‘see’, akuo ‘hear’, arxizo ‘start’, stamato ‘stop’) that do not. The authors emphasize that this problem field (aspect in na-clauses) is rather unexplored. Let us extend our observations to na-clauses and add a CA analysis to it.
(16) a. Thélo na parkáro\textsubscript{BIASP} to aftokínito
b'. I want to park the car
b. Thélo na parkáro\textsubscript{BIASP} aftokínita
c. Paidiá théloun na parkároun\textsubscript{BIASP} to aftokínito
c'. Children want to park the car

g. The compositional analysis works perfectly in (16), just like in (15) above.

Suppose there is a car in front of the garage that must be parked, someone around can say (16a) in Greek or (16a') in English. These situations, in both languages, are perfective. But if the same person is an applicant for a valet job, he can say (16b) in Greek or (16b') in English. These situations are imperfective, indefinitely iterative, due to the non-boundedness of the referent of the object-NP. Note that English park the car and Greek parkároun to aftokínito are perfective phrases in isolation. But if in front of the garage there is a car that must be parked every evening and if there are children around who like to park cars, the car park attendant can now say (16c) in Greek or (16c') in English. The situation referred to in both sentences is imperfective, indefinitely iterative, and this is solely due to the non-boundedness of the subject-NP. The Bulgarian equivalents of (16) are again fully equivalent lexically and syntactically.

If an aspectually full-fledged verb is used instead of the biaspectual parkáro ‘park’, it has to be perfective in (16a)-(16a’), stathméfso ‘park’, and imperfective in (16b)-(16c), stathméfso\textsubscript{IMPFV} ‘park’. The grammatically encoded aspect matches the perfective schema in (16a)-(16a’) with the boundedness of the subject- and object-NP and the imperfective one in (16b)-(16c) with their non-boundedness:

(17) a. Thélo na stathméfso\textsubscript{PFV} to aftokínito
a'. I want to park the car
b. Thélo na stathméfso\textsubscript{IMPFV} aftokínita
b'. I want to park cars
c. Paidiá théloun na stathméfso\textsubscript{IMPFV} aftokínita
c'. Children want to park cars

Aorists and Imperfects in Greek Viewed as Vendlerian Situations

Bulgarian and Greek feature the aorist-imperfect contrast, a mixed one, temporal-aspectual, in which the imperfect is covered by Vendler’s imperfective situations states and activities. A variant of Vendler’s classification of situations is proposed in Kabakčiev (2000: 279-307), a new Vendlerian situation, called episode, is introduced, represented, inter alia, in Bulgarian by the imperfective
aorist, see (18a,b,c) and in English prototypically by the for-time adverbial with preterit verb forms, see (18a',b',c').

(18)  

a. George tsaruva 60 godini  
a'. George reigned for 60 years  
b. Spah edin chas  
b'. I slept for an hour  
c. Varvyah v parka tazi sutrin  
‘I walked in the park this morning’

The episode stands between Vendlerian imperfectives (states+activities) and true perfectives (accomplishments+achievements). Episodes are temporally bounded just like perfectives but lack the pragmatically interpretable feature “brought to a natural end”, and can therefore be called quasi-perfective situations. Note carefully that sentences such as (18) above represent a major semantico-syntactic pattern: there are many thousands of such sentences in the two languages. Therefore, we need to ask what the Greek correspondences of Bulgarian/English sentences of type (18) would be, representing an episode. The answer is not difficult, see sentences such as (19a), Vlachos’ (2015: 13), (19b) with a for-time adverbial, such as (19c), with a for-time-like adverbial, and (19d,e), manifesting specific situational meanings:

(19)  
a. Ο Geórgios vasilepse gia 60 chrónia  
‘George reigned for 60 years’  
b. Koimíthika gia mia óra  
‘I slept for an hour’  
c. Épaixa ténis símera to proí  
‘I played tennis this morning’  
d. Épaixa éna paichnídi ténis símera to proí  
‘I played a game of tennis this morning’  
e. Épaixa éna paichnídi ténis gia mia olókliri óra símera to proí  
‘I played a game of tennis for a whole hour this morning’

Here vasilepse ‘reigned’, koimíthika ‘slept’ and épaixa ‘played’ are aorists formed from perfective lexical entries (Dimitrova 2019a: 188). Different cases of aspect coercion are observed here. In the case of (19a), the state verb vasilépso ‘reign’, is coerced from its immanent imperfectivity (temporal non-boundedness) into quasi-perfectivity (an episode) simultaneously by the aorist verb form and the phrase gia 60 chrónia ‘for sixty years’. In (19b,c) koimíthika

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\(^{18}\)In cross-language terms episodes are also represented by Slavic delimitative verbs, not to be considered here. The episode appears to pose a problem to some linguists who regard it as “unnecessary”. Ziegeler (2006: 14-16) insists that it is a “pragmatic inference without a conventionalized status”. As argued in Kabakčiev (2019: 286-307), an episode is not only a situation widely found across languages, it is grammatically represented in some (by the imperfective/telic aorist in Spanish, Bulgarian, Greek, etc.).
‘slept’ and épaixa ‘played’ are activities coerced from imperfectivity into episodes – by the aorist verb form and the adverbials gia mia óra ‘for an hour’ and símera to prí ‘this morning’. In (19d) there is no coercion, as the accomplishment phrase épaixa éna paichnídi ténis ‘played a game of tennis’ explicates true perfectivity (temporal boundedness with a pragmatic result) just like the verb form épaixa ‘played’. But in (19e) there is coercion of the accomplishment phrase épaixa éna paichnídi ténis ‘played a game of tennis’ from perfectivity (temporal boundedness and pragmatic result) into an episode (quasi-perfectivity), imposed by the adverbial για μια ολόκληρη ώρα ‘for a whole hour’.

This means that the Greek aorist engulfs lexical aspect, in certain cases even defacing and disfiguring it, and the temporal adverbials play an important part, coercing verb forms into certain Vendlerian situational meanings. In Bulgarian no such coercion is observed by temporal adverbials onto situational meanings of aspectually marked verb forms. Temporal adverbials simply match the meanings of the verb forms. Cf. (20), where tsaruva ‘reigned’ and 60 godini ‘for 60 years’ are a good match, just like the episode meaning of imperfective aorist forms coincides with the adverbials of limited duration in the rest of the sentences:

(20) a. Georg tsaruva 60 godini
    ‘George reigned for 60 years’
b. Spah edin chas
    ‘I slept for an hour’
c. Igrah tenis tazi sutrin
    ‘I played tennis this morning’
d. Izigrah edin geym tenis tazi sutrin
    ‘I played a game of tennis this morning’
e. Igrah edin geym tenis tsyal chas tazi sutrin
    ‘I played a game of tennis for a whole hour this morning’

Of course, as already indicated, aspectual coercion, through mapping, can be observed in Bulgarian, but less frequently, as in Vrataryat imashe otlichna proyava i uspya da spasi duzpata ‘The goalkeeper had an excellent feat and managed to save the penalty’ (Kabakčiev 2000: 52), where the boundedness of the nominal proyava ‘feat’ is mapped onto imasheIMPIMPFV, a verb marked twice as imperfective (an imperfective verb in the imperfect)!

The Article-Imperfect Interplay in Greek

Let us use the Bulgarian examples in (3) above, that are hypothetical constructs, not real sentences, to build similar ones in Greek and check how they would behave in a language that is very similar to Bulgarian – with VA, separate aorist and imperfect verb forms, and a definite article (but generally no indefinite):
a. O michanikós *episkevástike/episkevázei to aftokínito
   ‘The mechanic repaired the car’

b. O stratiótis *diéschise/diéschize to drómο
   ‘The soldier crossed the street’

c. I gynaíka *kathárise/katharízei to domátiο
   ‘The woman cleaned the room’

d. O tourístas *anévaine/anévaine stin koryffí
   ‘The tourist reached the border’

Even if it may require some mental effort to guess what the Greek sentences (21) would mean, i.e., if they existed, with verb forms common for the aorist and the imperfect, it can be conjectured that sentences of this kind would tend to explicate not imperfectivity but perfectivity, due to the presence of subjects and objects quantified by the definite article, just like in Bulgarian in (3), and according to Verkuyl’s perfective schema.

But what about the aorist? If the raison d’être of the imperfect is to eliminate the temporal boundedness of referents of nominals in certain types of sentences and thus prevent the transfer of temporal boundedness onto the referent of the verb, it is logically clear that the remaining member of the opposition, the aorist, could not have an imperfective value – as this value is already “occupied”. On the other hand, it would be illogical for the aorist to have a truly perfective value also, the one manifested by perfective VA, because the imperfect would then remain “without a partner”. The solution to the problem, brought about by the collective human brain, appears to be to build a contrast in which the aorist does not “enter foreign territory” and has its own aspectual meaning: either truly perfective or quasi-perfective, an episode, whereby the episode meaning is brought about by for-time adverbials forcing the episode meaning onto the verb, as in (19e).

Conclusion

The analysis confirmed the preliminary conjecture that Greek is like Bulgarian: a borderline/hybrid language featuring VA, an aorist/imperfect contrast, a definite article only (no regular pattern of an indefinite article), also displaying CA (including the article-aspect interplay) in certain conditions, especially when the aspectual meaning of the verb is not firmly fixed and hence coercible into a different situational value. An inseparable part of the present approach is the understanding that situation participant NPs are temporal entities. Otherwise a fruitful analysis of CA regularities is deemed impossible.

It is not surprising that two languages belonging to the Balkansprachbund, Bulgarian and Greek, share features related to CA. What is surprising, and also difficult to analyze, is that the two languages manifest specificities in the way CA values are explicated in verbs that are biaspectual or coercible into aspectual values different from the ones they nominally express. As this study
is an early attempt at exploring CA and VA values in Modern Greek, these
specificities ought to be explored and described in future contrastive
investigations of Bulgarian and Greek (possibly along with other closely
related languages) using the CA theory.

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