

New current relevance in Croatian: epistemic immediacy and the aorist

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Overview

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 - The corpus
 - Speakers' judgments
4. Discussion and cognitive analysis
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1. Introduction: the *aorist*

(1) *Stigoh iz daleka.*

‘I have arrived/arrived from far away.’

- traditional account:
 - absolute past time = the action was completed before the reference point and it cannot be in any way connected to the present
 - in other words = corresponds to the English Past Simple
 - **evokes “vividness, (...) succinctness and (...) intimacy” (Katičić 1991: 58)**

1. Introduction: the *perfekt*

(1a) ***Stigao sam iz daleka***

‘I have arrived/arrived from far away.’

- traditional account:
 - connected with the present =
corresponds to the English Present Perfect
 - stylistically neutral

1. Introduction: the problem

- Aorist usages:
 - traditionally described use (completed past action, sequence of several actions)
 - recent actions (e.g. with upravo 'just')
 - inevitable or planned future
- The problem:
 - what is the symbolic value of the aorist?

1. Introduction: aim

- the aorist expresses epistemic immediacy, i.e. the immediacy of the process in relation to the speaker and her knowledge about the event

2. Aorist usage patterns

Sequence of several actions:

(2) ***Odgovorih, i u roku par minuta dobih odgovor. Pa ja opet odgovorih. Pa dobih odgovor.***

‘I replied, and I got an answer in a matter of minutes. So I replied again. And I got another answer’.

2. Aorist usage patterns

Recent past usage with current relevance:

(3) *Eto mene, **dodoh** iz grada*

‘Here I am, I have returned from the city.’

2. Aorist usage patterns

Planned future or inevitable future with particular verbs:

(4) ...**odoh** i ja sutra, ali se vraćam kroz tri dana.

‘I am also leaving tomorrow, but I will be back in three days.’

3. Current usage tendencies

- 2 studies: how is the aorist predominantly used?
 - corpus study
 - speakers' judgments

3.1. The corpus study: procedure

- six most frequent perfective verbs:
- *doći* ‘come’, *otići* ‘leave’, *reći* ‘say’, *vidjeti* ‘see’, *dobiti* ‘get’ and *kupiti* ‘buy’
- only first person forms (most frequent!)
- 2 factors:
 - ‘positional’ adverbials
 - current relevance or future

3.1. The corpus study: results

- Total: 418 tokens
- Results 1: 'positional' adverbials
 - 'positional' adverbials: 30% (123) of the verbs
 - intervals and no adverbials: 70% (295) of the verbs (cf. 3.1.1 on the handout)
- Results 2: current relevance or future
 - Current relevance or future clear from the context: 43% (182 verbs)
 - Unclear context: 47% (236) (cf. 3.1.2 on the handout)

3.2. Speakers' judgments: participants and procedure

- Participants:
 - 159 native speakers of Croatian (cf. 3.2.1 on the handout)
- Questionnaire:
 - 5 tasks
 - 4 point forced choice Lickert scale; Y/N question; ordering elements

3.2. Speakers' judgments: participants and procedure

- Items:
 - Inevitable future (cf. ex. (4))
 - Recent past (cf. ex. (3))
 - Counter sequentiality (Givón's criteria)

3.2. Speaker's judgments: results

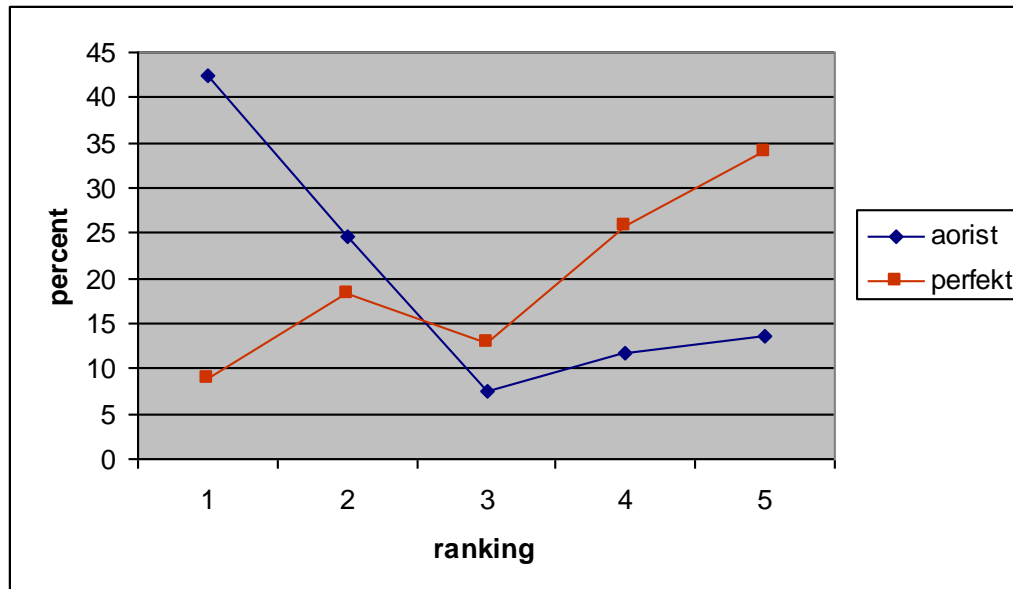
- Inevitable future (cf. ex. (4); 3.2.2 on the handout)
 - 72% report they may use it or use it with some frequency
 - 28% of participants say they would never use it

3.2. Speaker's judgments: results

- Recent past (3.2.2 on the handout)
 - Would you say *rekoh* when “your collocutor has not heard what you have just said, and you are repeating your words”?
 - 72% report they may use it or use it with some frequency
 - 28% of participants say they would never use it
- Recent past (cf. contrast between (1) and (2); 3.2.2 on the handout)
 - “Which is more distant?”
 - Perfekt (48%)
 - Aorist (19%)

3.2. Speaker's judgments: results

- Recent past (cf. contrast between (1) and (2); 3.2.2 on the handout)
 - What is the order of adverbials? (*upravo* 'just', *danas* 'today', *jučer* 'yesterday' and *prošle godine* 'last year', no adverbial)
 - *upravo* 'just' with aorist and perfekt



4. Discussion and cognitive analysis

- Recapitulation of results
 - narrative context (several actions in sequence)
 - epistemic immediacy:
 - highest frequency of 1st person forms (frequency data: Moguš, Bratanić and Tadić 1999)
 - primarily non-positional adverbials (corpus)
 - recent action (corpus + speakers)
 - future (corpus + speakers)
 - no counter-sequentiality (corpus (negative evidence) + speakers)

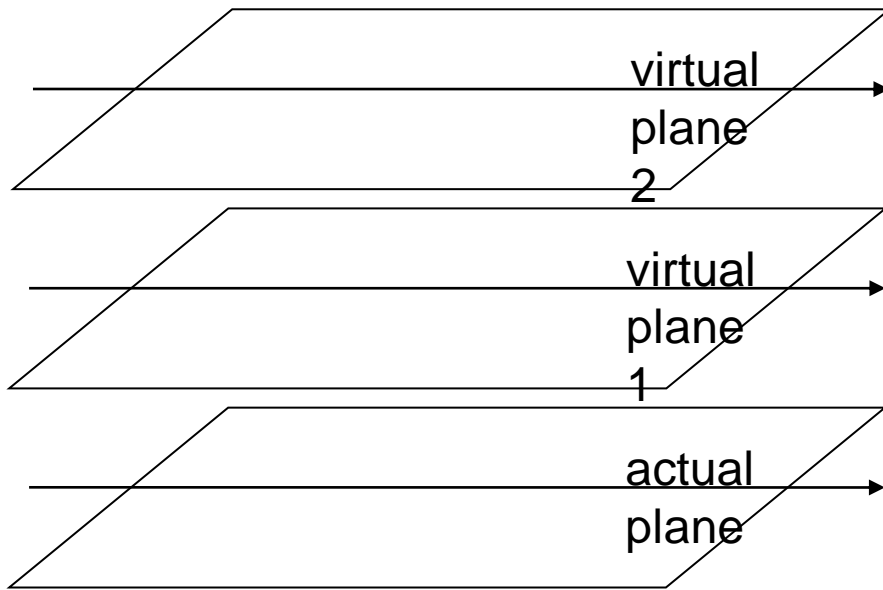
4. Discussion and cognitive analysis

- virtual plane
- action precedes the moment of speech
- epistemic immediacy = the process designated by the aorist is construed in such a way that the speaker/hearer and the ground are included in the immediate scope (extreme subjectification)

4. Discussion and cognitive analysis

- Schematic characterization
 - epistemic immediacy = V_1 vs. V_2
 - action = prior to G'

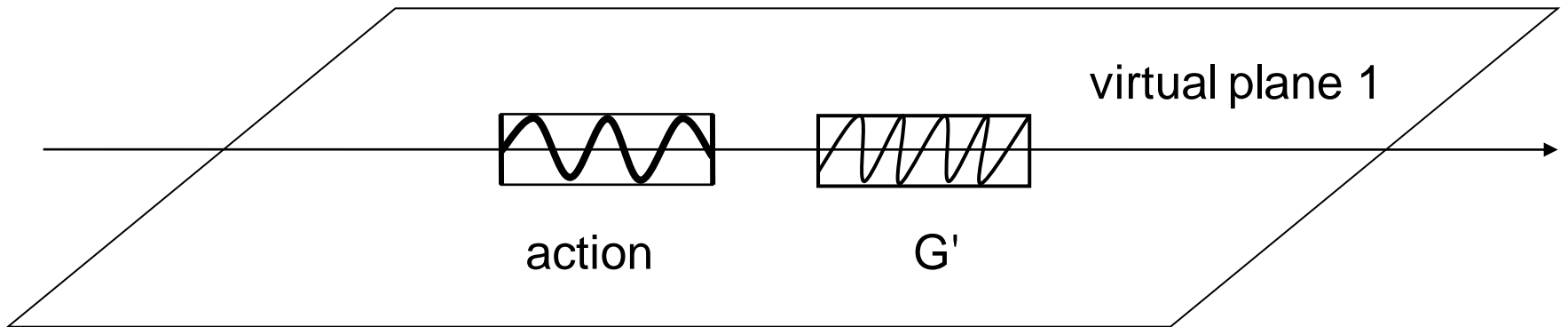
4. Discussion and cognitive analysis: 2 virtual planes



- V_1 = within immediate scope, epistemically immediate = aorist, imperfective present (in subjunctive...), etc.
- V_2 = outside immediate scope, distant = perfekt

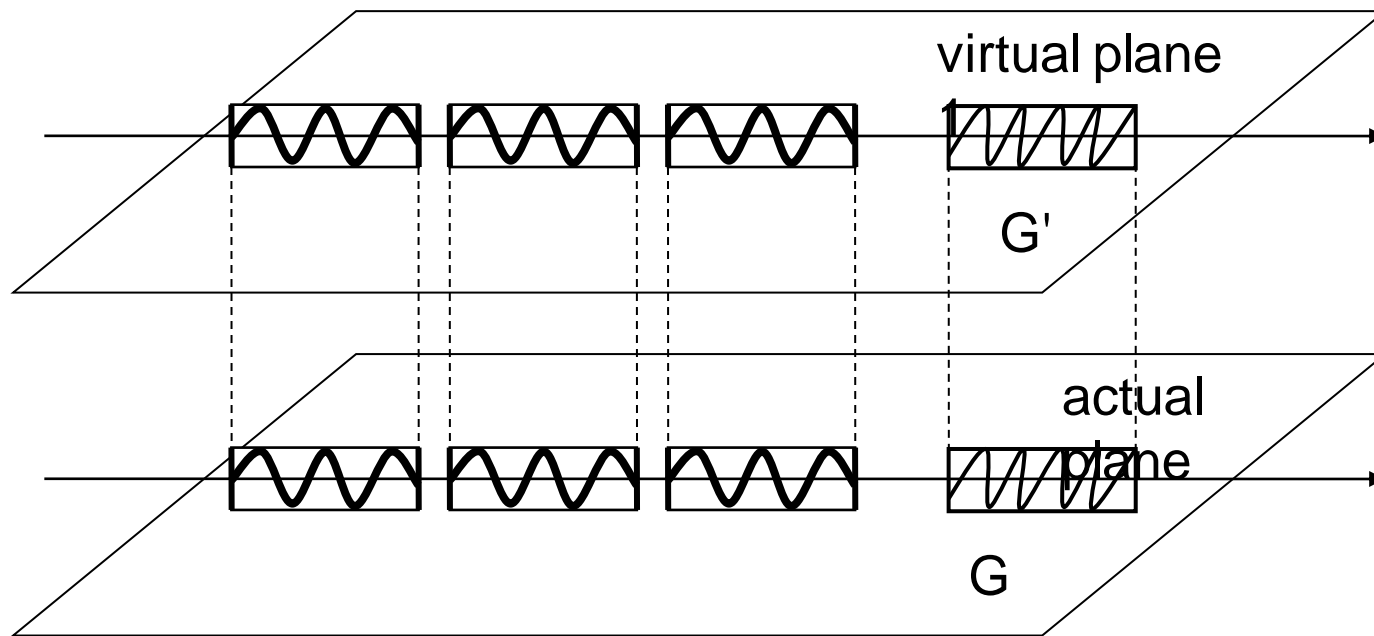
4. Discussion and cognitive analysis: prior to G'

- Schematic characterization
 - action = prior to G'



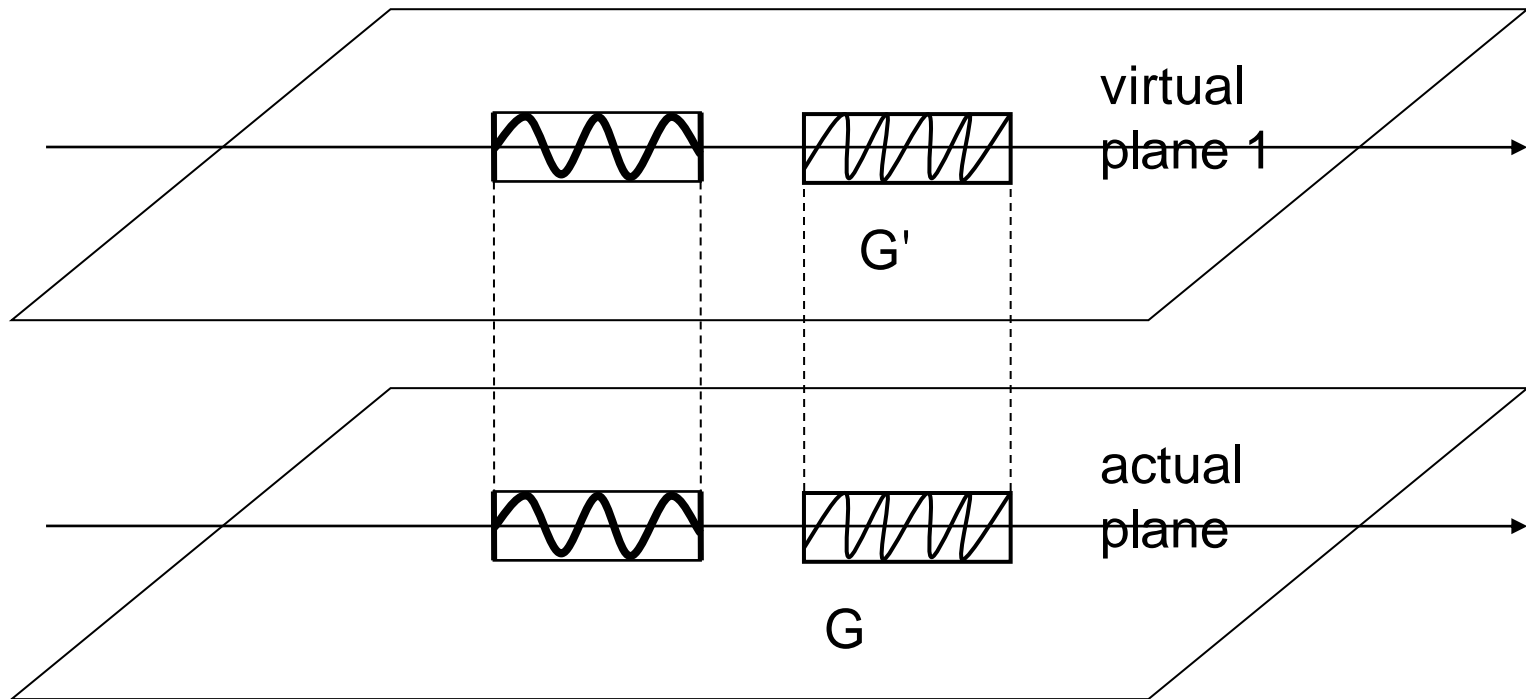
4. Discussion and cognitive analysis

- actions in sequence (cf. (2))



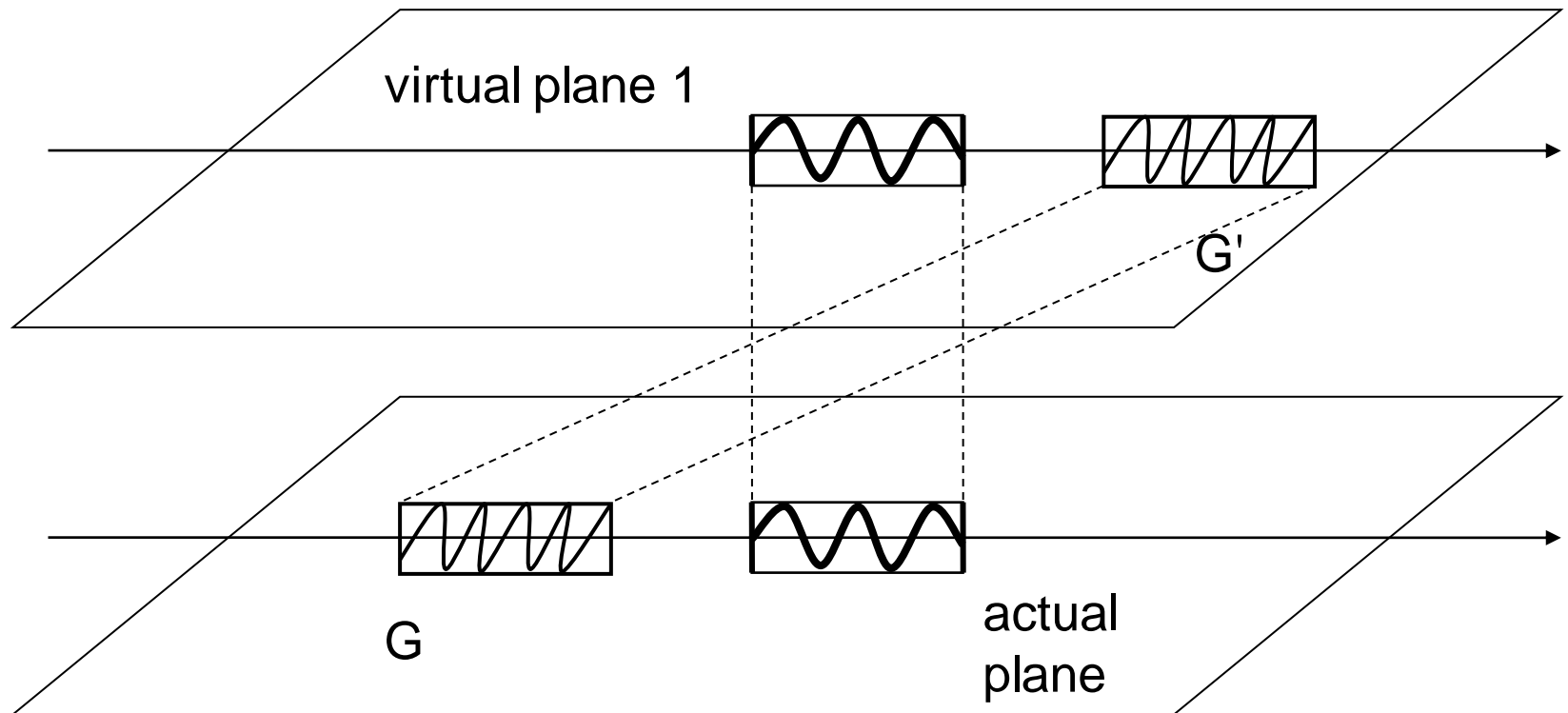
4. Discussion and cognitive analysis

- recent past (cf. (3))



4. Discussion and cognitive analysis

- inevitable/planned future (cf. (4))



5. Conclusion and future research

- epistemic immediacy of the aorist + schema
- Future research:
 - types of pragmatic inference of current relevance: across planes (actual and V_1) and within a plane (Langacker's proposal for English)
 - epistemic path = consequences of V_1 and V_2 for the Croatian tense system
 - (e.g. Croatian conditional (historically aorist of be + I-participle))
 - subjectification vs. dominion (V_1 as dominion internal?)

Thank you!

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