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ON THE OCCASIONAL EVASIVENESS OF “REACHED TELOS” AS A KEY ELEMENT OF PERFECTIVITY

Abstract: *Reached telos as a key concept of perfectivity is difficult to identify due to the pragmatic (non-semantic) nature of telos. It is evasive with certain expressions across languages and requires the exclusion of certain entities from perfectivity, e.g., Slavic delimitative verbs – like Bulgarian поразходя се and the corresponding English have a walk phrase. These can either be interpreted as involving a reached telos, hence perfective, or lacking it, hence episodes. Episodes are typically represented by Bulgarian imperfective aorists – bounded with no reached telos, while perfective aorists are perfective – bounded with a reached telos. Because of the synonymity of, e.g., поразходих се and разходих се – perfective aorists, and разхождах се – imperfective aorist, all meaning ‘walked’, ascribing boundedness plus reached telos to all of them blurs the difference between prototypical perfectivity and episode.*

Keywords: *reached telos, perfectivity-imperfectivity, aorist-imperfect, boundedness/non-boundedness*

Introduction. On “reached telos”. This paper analyzes the concept of reached telos, defined as a key element of perfectivity in cross-language terms (Kabakčiev 2023a: 51), which lacks a precise definition and its presence is taken for granted. As a result, difficulties arise when it must be described. In my initial model of compositional aspect, launched in Kabakčiev (1984) on the basis of Verkuyl’s (1972) discovery of compositional aspect, sophisticated in Kabakčiev (2000) and developed for four decades already, reached telos, previously called “attained goal” (Kabakčiev 2000: 19),¹ is an important and obligatory element of perfectivity, complementing boundedness, the major feature of perfectivity. True perfectivity is thus distinguished from quasi perfectivity – which incorporates temporal boundedness but

¹ “Reached telos” is a better term than “attained goal” because an attained goal presupposes control of the agent on what s/he is doing or trying to do, while reached telos is a more abstract notion and includes situations in which the subject is not an agent but an affected entity. For example, reach the border can be understood as an attained goal, predetermined, whereas realize one’s weakness and come upon a solution contain no predetermined goal.

with no reached telos. Perfective situations are Vendler's (1957) accomplishments and achievements, they are bounded. Conversely, states and activities are imperfective situations, non-bounded. But these four Vendlerian situations are insufficient for an adequate description of all possible time schemata, therefore an additional schema was launched, the episode, not incorporating reached telos, see below.

Theoretical framework, literature review. Despite its large cross-language presence, reached telos, an indispensable element of perfectivity, appears evasive in its essence with many verbs, VPs and sentences in different languages and, hence, it tends to require the exclusion of certain entities from perfectivity. For example, it is not self-evident that Slavic delimitative verbs, e.g., the Bulgarian perfective *поразходя се* 'walk for a while' and the equivalent English phrase *have a walk*, must be interpreted as comprising a reached telos or as lacking it. Bulgarian perfective aorists are perfective Vendlerian situations, bounded and with a reached telos. Imperfective aorists are also bounded situations but without a reached telos. Hence, must Bulgarian sentences like (1a) below be considered as encoding true perfectivity with a reached telos due to the presence of a perfective verb? Note that, in view of the fact that they are synonymous with sentences such as (1b) with an imperfective aorist, labeling them perfective would blur the difference between perfectivity – including a reached telos, and boundedness without a reached telos:

- (1) a. Поразходихме се_{PFVAOR} вчера в парка един час
 'We walked in the park for an hour yesterday'
 b. Разхождахме_{IMPFVAOR} се вчера в парка един час
 'We walked in the park for an hour yesterday'

Similarly, English (2a) ought to be deemed perfective with the *had a walk* phrase (see Kuteva et al. 2019: 343), and (2b) imperfective with the aspectually ambivalent *walked* plus a *for*-time adverbial, notwithstanding their synonymy. This is a problem – and the paper is an attempt to outline possible solutions to it.

- (2) a. John had a walk in the park for an hour
 b. John walked in the park for an hour

What is observed in (2) is not only boundedness of the object NP-referent *a walk* and of the whole VP *walked in the park*! Boundedness in (2a) is mapped farther back onto the subject NP-referent *John* – whose boundedness ultimately equals the temporal boundedness of the object NP-referent *a walk*, as revealed a long time ago (Kabakčiev 1984; 2000: 212).

So far so good, but what about the reached telos element – possible in the sentences above, which is obviously pragmatic and broadly conceptualized, i.e., not subject to a strictly semantic definition?

The paper tries to make sense of the conceptualization of reached telos – which within the theoretical framework assumed is key to the understanding of aspect. Aspect is represented by the cross-language, most probably universal, distinction between perfectivity and imperfectivity, the two major aspectological notions, whereby perfectivity encodes temporal boundedness plus a reached telos and imperfectivity temporal non-boundedness only. Three theoretical models are followed: Vendler's (1957) with its four situation schemata, Verkuyl's (1972; 1993; 2022) compositional aspect theory and my own model of compositional aspect (Kabakčiev 1984; 2000; 2019; 2023b) in which NP referents are temporal entities. Compositional aspect is analyzable through Verkuyl's two aspectual schemata – the perfective and the imperfective one, operational at the sentence level, not only at the VP level. My theoretical model of compositional aspect (*ibid.*), based on Verkuyl's but differing in certain respects from it, has been confirmed – theoretically and on data from a number of languages, in Lindstedt (Линдстет 1986), Leiss (2000), Vounchev (Вунчев 2007) – on Greek, Abraham & Leiss (2012), Bulatović (2013; 2020; 2022), Dimitrova (2021) – on Greek, Shabashvili (in Shabashvili & Kabakčiev 2021) – on Georgian, Bakardzhieva-Morikang (in Bakardzhieva-Morikang & Kabakčiev 2024) – on Ukrainian, Haxhillari (forthcoming) – on Albanian, Kutsarova (forthcoming) – on Turkish.

Perfectivity and imperfectivity in verbal-aspect languages (Slavic, Greek, Georgian, etc.) are encoded by verbs. In compositional-aspect languages (Germanic, Romance, Albanian, Finnish, etc.) they are effectuated at the sentence level and analyzable through Verkuyl's aspect schemata. Due to the necessity to analyze what happens to the telos in cases of situations that are perfective but discontinued, an additional Vendlerian situation, fifth, was introduced, the episode (Kabakčiev 2000: 288–307). It is a bounded situation like accomplishments and achievements but does not incorporate a reached telos (an attained goal). Episodes *cannot* be regarded as an exotic situation type because they have huge cross-language presence: sentences with *for*-time and similar adverbials of limited duration in English, sentences in Romance languages with atelic verbs in the aorist, Slavic delimitative verbs, Bulgarian imperfective aorists, Greek aorists and imperfects with *for*-time and similar adverbials, etc. If a theoretical model fails to include the episode as a Vendlerian situation, the difference between English (2a) – outwardly perfective with the *have* + NP phrase, and (2b), an episode with an activity verb *walked* bounded with a *for*-time adverbial but with no reached telos – simply cannot be explained.

Note that in an attempt to identify reached telos, any accomplishment can be discontinued prior to its natural completion – which leads to a bounded situation in which, however, no telos is reached, cf. English (3b) and Bulgarian (3c). Thus, if it is assumed that the perfective-imperfective contrast equals only that between boundedness and non-boundedness, this would bring about an assumption that aspectually English (3a) is equal to (3b) and Bulgarian (3d) is equal to (3e), something clearly wrong:

- (3) a. Nik drank the beer
 b. Nik drank the beer for two hours
 c. Ник пи_{ИМРАОР} бирата два часа
 d. Ник изпи_{ПФВАОР} бирата
 e. Ник пи_{ИМРАОР} бирата

Hence, first, the need to employ – wherever possible, the notion of reached telos; second, the episode as an additional Vendlerian situation. Phrased otherwise, any approach excluding episodes as a separate situation type is doomed to lead into a dead-end, failing to provide an explanation of cross-language data like those above.

Analysis of data involving “reached telos”. If we follow the general tenets of the compositional aspect theory with the insistence that *for*-time adverbials impart or presuppose imperfectivity of the verb referent, it will appear necessary to assign an episode meaning to both (2a) and (2b), as well as to the Bulgarian equivalents (4a) and (4b), despite the perfective meaning of the verb in (4a), supposedly involving a reached telos:

- (4) a. Джон се разходи_{ПФВАОР} в парка един час
 b. Джон се разхожда_{ИМРАОР/ИМП} в парка един час

The same is valid for Bulgarian sentences like (5a) with verbs like *хална* ‘eat a little’ – they are supposed to be assigned a reached telos because of their perfectivity:

- (5) a. Халнахме_{ПФВАОР} риба
 b. We ate some fish
 c. Ядохме_{ИМРАОР} риба

But note that the sentence with a perfective aorist (5a) is equal to an episode (5c) with an imperfective aorist, despite *хална* being a perfective verb. It follows that we need to assign not an accomplishment meaning but an episodic one to the perfective aorist *халнахме*, as with *се разходи* (4a). Such a thesis partially undermines the theoretical enterprise of assigning a reached telos to perfective expressions – and this favors a generalization that the concept of reached telos cannot be described in precise semantic terms but must be considered within a broader perspective, pragmatic, allowing various and even mutually exclusive interpretations. But in any case, it is necessary to distinguish between a temporally bounded situation with a reached telos and a temporally bounded one with no reached telos – and it is not imperative to follow previously established morphological paradigms forcing verb forms into preconceived slots such as “delimitative”.

Let us construct and analyze similar sentences with *have* phrases (here *have a talk*) in which it is not immediately clear whether the *have* phrase must be interpreted as an episode, i.e. a situation with no reached telos but otherwise bounded, or an accomplishment, i.e. a truly, prototypically perfective situation with a reached telos:

- (6) a. I talked with the lawyer
 b. I had a talk with the lawyer
 b. I had a talk with the lawyer for an hour

Rendered into Bulgarian (7), these sentences again provide no clue as to whether the imperfective aorists *разговарях* ‘talked’ and *имах разговор* ‘had a talk’ must be interpreted as bounded with no telos reached, while, conversely, the perfective aorist *проведох* ‘conducted’ must be interpreted as bounded with a telos reached. To the Bulgarian native speaker the three sentences are synonymous:

- (7) a. Разговарях_{ИМПАОР} с адвоката (един час)
 ‘I talked with the lawyer’
 b. Имаш_{ИМПАОР} разговор с адвоката (един час)
 ‘I had a talk with the lawyer’
 c. Проведох_{ПФВАОР} разговор с адвоката (един час)
 ‘I conducted a talk with the lawyer’

These issues, including Vendler’s classification, were recently discussed on Bulgarian and English data in an article (Коева 2021) revealing a surprising lack of knowledge of the aspectological literature and an insufficient command of English grammar. On the one hand, Vendler’s classification on Bulgarian data was analyzed two decades earlier in four large publications (Кабакчиев 1998; 1999a; Кабакчиев 1999b; Kabakčiev 2000: 32 – 34) – explaining at length and in depth this problem sphere and unaccounted for by the author. Apart from that, as a result, the author provides a wrong interpretation in aspectological terms of the crucially important English phrases of the *for*-time type, erroneously arguing that they equal Bulgarian phrases of the type *от един час* (Коева 2021: 143). It is common knowledge that the English *for an hour* type of phrase corresponds aspectologically to Bulgarian temporal adverbials with no preposition (Кабакчиев 1998: 243 – 251), as in (8a) = (8b), and not (8c), while the Bulgarian adverbial phrase *от един час* applies to the use of the English present perfect, as in the English correspondences in (9a), (9b) below.

- (8) a. Maria sang for an hour
 b. Мария пях един час
 c. *Мария пях от един час

The author argues that state situations can be complemented by temporal adverbials such as *for an hour* – something true in principle, but translating them into Bulgarian with the adverbial *от един час*, wrongly quoting Vendler (1957: 145) and Dowty (1979: 60)² and maintaining that sentences such as Bulgarian (9a), (9b) represent part of the *for*-time vs *in*-time aspect mechanism (Коева 2021: 143 – 144):

- (9) a. От дълги години съществува подводният град
 ‘The underwater city has existed for many years’
 b. От петнадесет години имаме спестовен влог
 ‘We have had a savings account for fifteen years’

The author does not understand that her Bulgarian sentences (9a) and (9b) are related to the use of the present perfect in English, something different from the aspectological use of the *for*-time adverbial phrase – whose features are interpretable through the English past indefinite – along with other finite and non-finite verb forms. This can be illustrated through sentences such as (10), different from (9):

- (10) a. Подводният град просъществува_{PFVAOR} / съществува_{IMPFVAOR} дълги години
 ‘The underwater city existed for many years’
 b. Петнадесет години имахме_{IMPFVAOR} спестовен влог
 ‘We had a savings account for fifteen years’

It is a fundamental difference. In (9) – in both languages, there exists an underwater city today and we have a savings account now. In (10) there exists no underwater city today and we have no savings account now. In English it is *impossible* to use the present perfect as a translation correspondence of Bulgarian (10a) and (10b), as the pastness value of the imperfective aorist in (10a) and (10b) rules out the present existence or relevance of the situation participants (Kabakčiev 2020):

- (11) a. *The underwater city has existed for many years [≠ 10a]
 b. *We have had a savings account for fifteen years [≠ 10b]

If we want to use the Bulgarian perfect in English translation correspondences of (10), this will move the situation participants *underwater city* and *savings account* from the realm of the present into the realm of the past (Kabakčiev 2020), thus requiring the use of the English past indefinite in the translation correspondence (12b) – and not (11a). Note that sentence (11a) is incorrect not in itself but as a translation correspondence of (12a):

- (12) a. Подводният град е съществувал дълги години
 b. The underwater city existed for many years

² Vendler and Dowty have never analyzed Bulgarian data (to my knowledge).

Does this comparison between the use of the *for*-time adverbial phrase with the present perfect and the past indefinite in English relate to the problem of reached telos? Yes, it does. Because while the *for*-time English adverbial phrase used in the present perfect *cannot* signify (directly) or explicate (indirectly) a reached telos in sentences of type (11a), it *can* in certain specific cases be associated with a reached telos in other types of sentences, as already explained. For Bulgarian, recall (7) above: (7c) contains a perfective verb which, by virtue of being perfective and by definition, involves a reached telos. However, (7c) is without any doubt synonymous with the sentences (7a) and (7b) – which contain imperfective aorist verb forms, i.e., not perfective ones, and a *for*-time type of adverbial can be added; *проведох разговор* in (7c), which contains a reached telos – being a perfective aorist, is at the same time synonymous with *разговарях*_{IMPAOR} and *имах*_{IMPAOR} *разговор* and again a *for*-time type of adverbial can be added. This means that (7a) and (7b), not containing a perfective verb, could nevertheless be assigned a reached telos.

As argued in Kuteva et al. (2019: 343), where my thesis about English collocations of the *have a fall/swim* type is discussed (Kabakčiev 2000: 212), these phrases perform a perfectivizing function. But the issue concerning a reached telos in them is not considered, as in many other cases. The direct object NP-referent in *have a fall/swim* maps its boundedness onto the verb referent, making the latter bounded, hence perfective. Let us construct sentences with these two phrases – beginning with a perfective one (13a) with a reached telos, where, however, the telos is beyond the agent’s command: the boy did not intend to break the vase, yet he did. Such sentences are considered, nevertheless, perfective, not only containing a telos but also one that is reached. Analogously with (13b): the skater fell – without wanting this to happen. Such sentences are definitely considered perfective – containing some “abstract telos” that is reached.

- (13) a. The boy involuntarily broke the vase
 b. The skater had a fall
 c. The girl had a swim in the pool
 d. The girl swam in the pool for some time

But what about sentence (13c)? Must we have it that this sentence is perfective because the girl envisioned a telos – to swim some particular distance or time? As shown on Greek data in Dimitrova & Kabakčiev (2021: 201), whether a sentence depicts a perfective or an imperfective situation, or an episode, depends, in principle, not solely on the verb or the verb phrase in the sentence but *on the whole sentence*. Compare the episode (14a) – bounded with no telos reached – an episode, to (14b) – bounded with a telos reached:

- (14) a. To paidí étrexe_{AOR} ston marathónio
 ‘The child ran [for X time] in the marathon’
 b. To paidí étrexe_{AOR} ton marathónio
 ‘The child ran the marathon’

In both (14a) and (14b) the verb form is an aorist, encoding temporal boundedness, but yielding different results: (14a) is an episode due to the prepositional phrase *ston marathónio* ‘in the marathon’ encoding non-boundedness; (14b) is truly perfective not only because of the aorist form but primarily due to the boundedness of both NPs – subject and object. Greek is different from Bulgarian: Greek aorists are used with perfective verbs only, imperfects with imperfective ones only. In Bulgarian, aorists and imperfects are separately combined with perfective and imperfective verbs. The two Greek sentences (14) with the same verb form, aorist, yield two aspectually different verb forms in Bulgarian, an imperfective aorist in (15a) and a perfective aorist in (15b).³ But the second parts of the VP remain the same in Bulgarian: a prepositional adverbial phrase in (15a), an object-NP in (15b).

- (15) a. Детето бяга_{IMPFVAOR} в maratona
 b. Детето пробяга_{PFVAOR} maratona

Things become really interesting when the subject-NP is pluralized. When in (16) the verb is invariably perfective (perfective aorist) and both NPs – subject and object, in (16a) are definite, hence bounded, the sentence is grammatical, there is a reached telos, hence perfectivity. If the subject-NP is an indefinite plural (16b), hence nominally non-bounded, this ought to explicate temporal non-boundedness and imperfectivity of the verb referent. But it does not: because the verb is marked for perfectivity (perfective aorist) and boundedness is therefore forced onto the bare NP *деца* ‘children’, the boundedness interpreted as temporal. But if a prepositional phrase *в maratona* ‘in the marathon’ is inserted, (16c), the use of a perfective aorist is banned, the sentence becomes non-grammatical:

- (16) a. Децата пробягаха_{PFVAOR} maratona
 b. Деца пробягаха_{PFVAOR} maratona
 c. *Деца пробягаха_{IMPFVAOR} в maratona

Thus the translation correspondence of Bulgarian (15b) is English (17a), and vice versa. And if we decide to pluralize the definite subject-NP in (17a), the result is (17b), a sentence remaining perfective with definite (bounded) subject-NPs. But (17c) becomes imperfective, with *children* interpreted as not only indefinite but also non-bounded:

- (17) a. The child ran the marathon
 b. The/These children ran the marathon
 c. Children ran the marathon

³ This reveals an important circumstance, that in Greek aorists and imperfects aspect is often effectuated at the level of the sentence, compositionally (see Dimitrova & Kabakčiev 2021), whereas in Bulgarian the four aspecto-temporal preterit forms carry the aspectual values separately.

The perfective (14b) in Greek and the perfective Bulgarian (15b) are correctly rendered in English through (17a). But if we decide to make the subject indefinite and non-bounded in Bulgarian, as in English (17c), then the literally translated Bulgarian (18a) will not be a good match – it sounds incomplete, strange, (18b) even more:

- (18) a. ?Деца пробягаха_{PFVAOR} maratona
 b. ??Деца бягаха_{IMPFVAOR} maratona
 c. *Деца пробягаха_{IMPFVAOR} в maratona
 d. Деца бягаха_{IMPFVAOR} в maratona

The reason is that English (17c) is an imperfective sentence with a non-bounded subject NP-referent, matching Verkuyl's imperfective schema, hence the literal translation into Bulgarian (18a) is wrong for being perfective – though not entirely non-grammatical in itself, describing the participation of a bounded set of children in the marathon. What is at issue is the difference – crucial but usually remaining beyond the comprehension of aspectologists (see Kabakčiev 2019; 2023b) – between the bounded and the non-bounded interpretation of English *children* and Bulgarian *деца*. In (17c) the overtly (grammatically) non-bounded *children* maps its non-boundedness onto the aspectually ambivalent verb *ran*, making the sentence imperfective (Kabakčiev 2019; 2023b). However, due to the availability in Bulgarian (unlike in English) of perfective verbs, Bulgarian (18a) demonstrates a subject NP-referent which is bounded due to the boundedness of *пробягаха*_{PFVAOR} ‘ran to the end of’ – mapped onto the NP-referent, a phenomenon demonstrated and explained many times (Kabakčiev 1984; 2000; 2019; 2023b) but continuing to baffle much of the aspectological community. Many researchers fail to see the difference between aspect at the VP- and the sentence-level and the fact that compositional aspect is a sentence-level phenomenon.

Note that, as *деца* ‘children’ here equals *няколко деца* ‘some children’ – for reasons already explained, sentence (18a) can be transformed into (19a), and this sentence is (or at least appears) semantically equivalent to (19b):

- (19) a. Няколко деца пробягаха_{PFVAOR} maratona
 b. Няколко деца бягаха_{IMPFVAOR} в maratona

Thus the main problem persists: *пробягаха*_{PFVAOR} is a true perfective form, grammatically encoded (a perfective aorist), hence it should be deemed as containing a reached telos. But *бягаха*_{IMPFVAOR} is not a true perfective. It is an imperfective aorist and the presence of reached telos here is dubious (at least). Nevertheless, (19a) and (19b) are semantically equivalent, therefore an aspectologist could ascribe a reached telos to (19b) despite its imperfectivity and its status of an episode. In any case, if this reasoning is adequate (it seems to be), it demonstrates again that “reached telos” is often a truly evasive thing.

In Slavic aspectology it has been held that, as delimited perfective verbs signify activities or states, they are not telic (Altshuler 2016: 116) – which in the present framework means “not perfective”. This assumption can be accepted but with a nuance. The perfectivity of (20a) is easily identified. This sentence belongs to Verkuyl’s perfective schema with bounded NPs (subject & object) and a telic verb. But a reached telos is a little hard to identify in (20b), as John did not aim to fall, much more so in (20c) where John simply walked. Furthermore, this sentence is equivalent to the clearly imperfective (20d) with no telos:

- (20) a. John suffered a fall
 b. John had a fall
 c. John had a walk
 d. John walked

Consider a similar problem with “telos” in Bulgarian grammar. Most Bulgarianists maintain a shockingly wrong idea (refuted in Kabakčiev 2022, 2023a) that perfects are not formed from imperfect participles. Concerning the way these forms are obtained, Penchev (Пенчев 1987), too, does not follow this wrong understanding, otherwise prevalent in Bulgarianist literature from Andreychin (Андрейчин 1944) to the present day. Penchev recognizes forms with imperfect participles such as *пеели са* ‘they have sung’ as true perfects. Koeva makes another drastic mistake here, ascribing to Penchev (Пенчев 1987) the idea that forms with imperfect participles like *четял е* ‘he has read/been reading’ are not perfects but inferentials, see Lakova & Koeva (Лакова, Коева 2021: 130). Actually Penchev not only *maintains exactly the opposite*, he actually *emphasizes* it: *пеели са* and all similar forms with imperfect participles are perfects (Пенчев 1987: 471).

In an earlier analysis of the Bulgarian perfect, Penchev (Пенчев 1976: 219) uses the following examples, relevant for analyzing “telos”:

(21) a. Тоя човек е имал_{PERFECT-IMPFVAOR/IMP} големи грижи. Търсил е_{PERFECT-IMPFVAOR} сина си. Ходил е_{PERFECT-IMPFV-AOR} и е разпитвал_{PERFECT-IMPFV-AOR/IMP} къде ли не
 ‘This man had great worries. He looked for his son. He went and inquired everywhere’

b. Тоя човек е имал_{PERFECT-IMPFVAOR/IMP} големи грижи тази сутрин. Търсил е_{PERFECT-IMPFVAOR} сина си. Ходил е_{PERFECT-IMPFVAOR} и е разпитвал_{PERFECT-IMPFV-AOR/IMP} къде ли не

‘This man had great worries this morning. He looked for his son. He went and inquired everywhere’

c. Тоя човек е имал_{PERFECT-IMPFVAOR/IMP} големи грижи миналата година. Търсел е_{IMPFVIMP} сина си. Ходел е_{PERFECT-IMPFVIMP} и е разпитвал_{PERFECT-IMPFVAOR/IMP} къде ли не

‘This man had great worries last year. He looked for his son. He went and inquired everywhere’

d. Тоя човек е имал_{PERFECT-IMPFVAOR/IMP} големи грижи миналата година. Търсил е_{IMPFVIMP} сина си. Ходил е_{PERFECT-IMPFVIMP} и е разпитвал_{PERFECT-IMPFVAOR/IMP} къде ли не

‘This man had great worries last year. He looked for his son. He went and inquired everywhere’

Sentence (21a) does not contain a time adverbial and the imperfective aorist perfects *търсил е/ходил е* ‘has been searching/going around’ suggest that within a bounded temporal interval the man was unsuccessful in his attempts to find his son, due to the boundedness of the imperfective aorist signifying that the man’s attempts came to an end with nothing achieved. The same with (21b), which places even stricter bounds on the time interval. If the imperfective aorist participles are replaced with imperfective imperfect ones (*търсел/ходел е*) in a sentence with a ‘last year’ time adverbial, see (21c), the meaning is that the man spent the whole year looking for his son with no result. Apart from that, the search had no bounds, it was not restricted to the period of last year. Finally, when in sentence (21d) the imperfective imperfect participles are replaced with imperfective aorist ones and the time adverbial remains the same (‘last year’), the notion of reached telos appears more relevant, as the man’s aim was to look for his son, and he fulfilled this aim.

Judging from (21) too, reached telos could be ascribed to many sentences otherwise escaping the description of perfectivity. This especially applies to the verb *имам* ‘have’, a flexible one with a special semantics, a light verb capable of explicating perfectivity *or* imperfectivity – these values being forced on it from the NP-referent or at the sentence level through the impact of the subject NP-referent too – as shown in Dimitrova & Kabakčiev (2021) and observed in sentences such as (17c), (18d) and (22c):

- (22) а. Този филм е имал_{PERFECT-IMPFVAOR/IMP} голям успех в ЕС
 б. Този филм е постигнал_{PERFECT-PFVAOR} голям успех в ЕС
 в. Български филми са имали_{PERFECT-IMPFVAOR/IMP} голям успех в ЕС

Despite the verb’s aspectual neutrality in (22a), the singularity and temporal boundedness of the two NP-referents are mapped onto the verb referent, forcing it into perfectivity, and in (22b) the boundedness of the verb (perfective) is mapped onto the NPs. And in (22c) the non-bounded plurality and temporal non-boundedness of the subject NP-referent force imperfectivity onto the aspectually neutral verb, as demonstrated in Verkuyl (1972; 1993; 2022), Kabakčiev (1984; 2000; 2019), Bulatović (2020; 2022).

Conclusion. A singly cursory glance – necessarily by insightful eyes – at sentences such as those in (22) suffices to reconfirm the generalization about aspect as a universal phenomenon made some time ago (Kabakčiev 2019: 212), namely: aspect is an all-pervading and perpetual process of mapping temporal features between different elements of the sentence, mainly NPs and verbs, and it does not

matter whether aspect is verbal or compositional. As illustrated here on data from English, Bulgarian and Greek, and although English is a compositional-aspect language while the other two are verbal-aspect languages, the article-aspect interplay, including the (in)definiteness-aspect interplay, is a hugely important cross-language phenomenon cutting widely across languages. But the major conclusion in this paper is that the concept of reached telos is an integral part of the concept of perfectivity, indispensable for its identification and detailed description. Yet “reached telos” escapes – for the time being – proper characterization in many cases and is therefore definitely in need of future research.

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