

Telicity: Incremental Relations and Scales

Hana Filip

Heinrich Heine University, Düsseldorf, Germany

hana.filip@gmail.com, filip@hhu.de

There are two major contrasting perspectives on the formation of telic predicates. A MEREOLOGICAL MODEL understands telicity in terms of correspondences between the part structure of the denotation of predicates of eventualities and that of predicates of objects (or stuff) related to them. The key phenomenon to be explained is ASPECTUAL COMPOSITION:

- (1) a. *eat ice-cream*: cumulative argument $\approx$ atelic predicate
- b. *eat a slice of pizza*: quantized argument $\approx$ telic predicate

The explanation relies on the lexical semantics of a class of incremental verbs like *eat*. Their key aspectually relevant property is that they specify an incremental relation between the part structures of their eventuality and Incremental Theme argument (Krifka 1986, 1989, 1998; Filip 1989, 1993, 1999; Dowty 1991).

The other, SCALAR MODEL takes the notion of scale as its central aspectually relevant property. It is paradigmatically instantiated in the lexical structure of gradable adjectives (e.g., *cool*, *wide*) and verbs derived from them (e.g., *cool* or *widen*). Scalar models seek to understand telicity in terms of the closure properties of scales, whether they are open or closed, and possibly also the scale's mereological complexity, but eliminating the class of incremental verbs as a sui generis aspectual class (see e.g., Hay et al 1999, Kennedy and Levin 2008, Rappaport Hovav 2008, Levin and Rappaport Hovav 2010, Kennedy 2012, Bochnak 2013, Beavers 2013, i.a.):

- (2) a. *The room cooled*. open scale $\approx$ atelic predicate
- b. *The room cooled by 10 degrees overnight*. closed scale $\approx$ telic predicate

The goal of this talk is to review the core features of these two models. The evaluation of their strengths and weaknesses leads me to propose that incremental relations (prototypically instantiated in their lexicalization by incremental verbs) and scalar change (modeled on the measure of change lexicalized by scalar verbs) are two independent notions in the analysis of telic phenomena, and neither is ontologically prior, or reducible, to the other. A comprehensive theory of telicity must integrate both, along with the essential theoretical components that support them, to provide a uniform analysis of the entire empirical domain of telicity. I will outline an approach seeking to do just that, also building on some previous related proposals in Rothstein 2004; Filip & Rothstein 2005; Filip 2008; Beavers 2008, 2012. It rests on the overarching idea that telicity depends on a set of constraints governing how predicates—and, more generally, the grammar—allow us to individuate and (re)identify events in their denotation. The key ingredients are INCREMENTAL RELATIONS between the relevant proper parts of an eventuality and the corresponding proper parts of a SCALE that measures changes in the *extensive* or *intensive* properties of one of its participants. Among the factors that determine the parameters of scalar variation, the aspectual class of the dynamic verb root in a given predication is of central importance. This motivates a classification of dynamic verbs into three main aspectual classes that departs from common classification taxonomies: scalar, (strictly) incremental, and process (neither scalar nor incremental) classes.

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