

Nominal Determination, Aspect, and Telicity in Slavic

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In the talk we want to argue that a telic incremental theme predication (e.g. *to eat, to drink, to build*) in Bulgarian and Upper Silesian, a south-west Polish dialect, is neither solely realized by a definite (quantized) noun nor by a perfective verb. Rather both are contributing factors in realizing telicity. We argue that Bulgarian and Upper Silesian show different and stronger restrictions for the realization of telicity than the other Slavic languages do.

Usually, for Germanic languages it is assumed that telicity is achieved by incremental theme arguments that denote a specific quantity, i.e. if they are quantized (cf. Krifka, 1986, 1992). Germanic languages use the definite article among other strategies to indicate quantization. This strategy is not available for most of the Slavic languages, which have no definite article. Here it is argued that perfective aspect expresses definiteness of the incremental theme argument (cf. the Russian examples in 1 in contrast to the English translations). Based on such data, different authors equate the function of perfective aspect and the definite article (e.g. Leiss, 2000; Borer, 2005).

(1) [Russian]

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|-----|--|-------------|--------------|----------------|
| (a) | <i>Ivan el</i> | <i>xleb</i> | <i>(*za)</i> | <i>10 min.</i> |
| | Ivan eat.IM.PAST | bread.ACC | (in) | 10 min. |
| | '*Ivan ate bread in ten minutes.' | | | |
| (b) | <i>Ivan s''el</i> | <i>xleb</i> | <i>za</i> | <i>10 min.</i> |
| | Ivan S-eat.PF.PAST | bread.ACC | in | 10 min. |
| | 'Ivan ate (all) the bread in ten minutes.' | | | |

Filip (2004) argues against the equation of perfective aspect and definiteness, mainly based on Slavic languages without a definite article. We will provide new data for her claim by discussing Slavic languages that have an aspectual system as well as a definite article. In these languages, the use of a definite (i.e. quantized) incremental theme argument does not necessarily yield a telic predication. If the verb is imperfective, as in (2a), the predication is atelic. While a perfective verb, in combination with a quantized noun, leads to a telic predication (2b). This holds for Upper Silesian as well as Bulgarian. Both languages allow the combination of an imperfective verb with a bare noun, in this case the predication is always atelic. But the combination of perfective verbs and bare nouns is more restricted and differs in both languages. In Upper Silesian, only bare singular count nouns can combine with perfective verbs and yield a telic predication (2c).

(2) [Upper Silesian]

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|-----|--------------------------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|----------------|
| (a) | <i>Łon jod</i> | <i>te</i> | <i>jabko</i> | <i>(*za</i> | <i>godzina.)</i> | |
| | he eat.IMPF.PAST | DEF | apple | (in | hour) | |
| | 'He ate of the apple.' | | | | | |
| (b) | <i>Łon</i> | <i>z-jod</i> | <i>te</i> | <i>jabko</i> | <i>za</i> | <i>godzina</i> |
| | he | Z-eat.PF.PAST | DEF | apple | in | hour |
| | 'He ate the apple in an hour.' | | | | | |

- (c) *Łon z-jod jabko za godzina*
 he Z-eat.PF.PAST apple.ACC in hour
 'He ate an apple in an hour.'

In Bulgarian, the combination of a bare singular count noun with a perfective verb is very restricted. (3a), in contrast to (2c) is ungrammatical. The grammaticality increases if the bare count noun is modified by an adjective, as in (3b). But one also finds examples of an unmodified bare count noun with a perfective verb, as in (3c). (3b) and (3c) are both telic, but the acceptability of (c) varies among our informants. Also the sentence seems to have a dispositional interpretation, according to one informant. For the talk we will further investigate the use of bare nouns in Bulgarian and how it is restricted, in contrast to Upper Silesian.

- (3) [Bulgarian]
 (a) **Marija iz-jade jabalka*
 Marija IZ-eat.PF.AOR apple
 (b) *Marija iz-jade gromna jabalka za čas*
 Marija IZ-ate.PF.AOR large apple in hour
 'Maria ate a large apple in an hour'
 (c) *Šče na-piša kniga za čas*
 will NA-write.PF.3Sg book in hour
 'She will write a book in an hour' (Ignatova 2008: 136)

In the talk we will indicate how the strategy used in Bulgarian and Upper Silesian (but also in Macedonian) differs from the strategies used in the Germanic and Slavic languages. This will provide an interesting test case for the interaction of noun determination and aspect in expressing telicity. It will show that perfective aspect and noun determination do not have the same function, but are used for different purposes, which have to be combined in Bulgarian and Upper Silesian to yield a telic incremental theme predication. A special focus will be put on the contexts in which perfective use alone yields a telic interpretation, in combination with bare nouns. In this respect, the talk will present a contrastive discussion of a less discussed type of language (with respect to telicity) and the variation of aspectual composition within this type.

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