

The Role of Durativity in Argument Realization

Although work by Dowty (1991), Tenny (1992), *inter alia*, explores the role of telicity in argument realization (e.g. its correlation with objecthood), few researchers have focused on the aspectual notion of durativity, which I show also plays a role. In particular, although many ingestion and forceful contact verbs undergo conative alternations (e.g. *eat/cut/slice (at) the apple*), it is seldom noted that achievements do not:

- (1) John broke/punctured/pricked/shattered/splintered (*at) the vase.

I argue that this follows from the interaction of the predicate’s **durativity** and how **affected** (e.g. changed, destroyed) the patient is, notions I model in Hay et al.’s (1999) scalar approach to telicity in ways that predict a significant interaction. Starting with affectedness, consider (2)

- (2) a. eat the apple. (Apple goes from whole to entirely eaten (to a conventional degree))
 b. cut the apple. (Apple cut, not necessarily to a particular degree)
 c. tap the apple. (Apple not necessarily affected)

For predicate *P* over event *e*, patient *x*, and scale of change *s*, the degree of affectedness of *x* reflects how specific *P* is about *x*’s “progress” on *s*. The change is *quantized* if *x* transitions between specific, unique states *b_P* and *g_P* on *s* (cf. (2a)). Quantized changes determine telicity: *e* ends when *x* reaches state *g_P*. The change is *non-quantized* if the initial and final states are entailed to exist, but are not necessarily uniquely specified (cf. (2b)). I extend these two categories by defining *unspecified* changes, where no transition necessarily occurs (cf. (2c)).

Turning to durativity, I define two types of scales: binary and >binary. Binary scales correlate with punctual events whereas >binary scales correlate with durative events (Beavers 2002, Wechsler 2005, Kennedy and McNalley 2005). Based on these definitions, cross-classifying predicates by affectedness and durativity produces an extended version of the traditional Vendler classes (with one class ruled out, discussed below):

(3)

	<i>binary/punctual</i>	<i>>binary/durative</i>
<i>unspecified</i>	Semelfactives <i>tap the apple (once)</i>	Activities <i>cut at the apple (drunkenly)</i>
<i>non-quantized</i>	N/A	“Activities” w/ continuous change <i>cut the apple, eat at the apple (slowly)</i>
<i>quantized</i>	Achievements <i>shatter the vase</i>	Accomplishments <i>eat the apple</i>

The conative alternation preserves durativity, but moves a predicate up the scale of affectedness. For instance, *eat the apple* is an accomplishment while *eat at the apple (slowly)* is an “activity” with continuous change. *Cut the apple* is an “activity” with continuous change, while *cut at the apple (drunkenly)* is a traditional activity. Crucially, this analysis predicts that non-quantized, punctual predicates are a conceptual impossibility, since on a binary scale the initial and final states are always uniquely specified. This explains the fact that achievements do not alternate, since the resultant predicate type is ruled out. This is supported cross-linguistically: Tsunoda (1981) shows that punctual predicates entailing high degrees of affectedness are strongly transitive and often admit no alternations. Thus my analysis links durativity, telicity, and argument realization together by reducing the traditional Vendler classes to two cross-classifying parameters that predict the non-existence of certain predicate types.