

Comprehending compositional telicity: the role of measure phrases

Telicity, which characterizes events having a natural endpoint, can emerge either from the verb semantics itself or compositionally, through interactions with other constituents of the sentence. Telicity can be construed semantically -via entailment- or via a pragmatic inference. So-called strong telicity markers, like resultative particles (e.g., *auf* 'open' in *aufessen* 'eat up'), obligatorily lead to a telic reading of the sentence. Specific definite DPs, in contrast, construe telicity pragmatically; the telic reading is not always computed (*He wiped the table; he ate the rice*), making specific definite DPs weak telicity markers. Existing empirical evidence found effects of verb type, noun type, and determiner type, revealing distinctions between children's and adults' interpretations, as well as language-specific differences.

To date, it is open whether strong telicity markers also exist within the nominal domain, parallel to the role of resultative particles within the verbal domain. I suggest that measure phrases (MP), which quantize a second non-quantized noun through standard and non-standard measure terms (e.g. *a litre of water, a glass of milk, a slice of bread*), are strong telicity markers within the nominal domain (e.g., *he ate a bowl of rice*). In my presentation, I will first discuss the findings of previous comprehension studies of compositional telicity in different languages, and then introduce the experimental design aiming to investigate the role of MPs in the comprehension of telicity in children acquisition.