The ingredients of telicity

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1. **Background.** Some of the most influential semantic analyses of telicity are those assuming homomorphism between the part structure of the event argument of a given verbal predicate and the part structure of the incremental theme argument in this predicate (Krifka 1998). More recent investigations (Filip 1999, Beavers 2012) have revealed that it is not one but two incremental themes that determine the aspectual make-up of verbal predicates. Consider (1).

(1)  
   a. The earthquake shook a book off the shelf in/?for a few seconds.  
   b. The earthquake shook books off the shelf for/?in a few seconds.  
   c. The earthquake shook a book for/?in a few seconds.  
   d. The earthquake shook books for/?in a few seconds.  

(Filip 1999: 100, (33))  

Notice that a telic interpretation arises just in case two conditions hold: (1) the quantity of the referent of the argument that undergoes change of location is specified and (2) the endpoint of the path can be determined. In (1a) the first condition is fulfilled thanks to the nominal expression *a book*, while the second condition is fulfilled thanks to the PP *off the shelf*.

In order to characterize the relationship between the event argument of a given verbal predicate and its two incremental themes (i.e. the argument whose referent undergoes a change and the path), Beavers (2012) defines a novel homomorphic relation, which he refers to as a figure-path relation (FPR), and he also provides a novel definition of telicity, from which it follows that telicity obtains if and only if the event participant that undergoes some kind of change ("the figure" in Beavers’s terminology) receives quantized reference and the path argument is bounded.

2. **Claim.** In this talk my objective is twofold: On the one hand, I argue for an FPR-based analysis of telicity by providing evidence for the existence of figure-path relations in Hungarian. On the other hand, I also propose that this analysis be supplemented with the notion of event maximalization (Filip and Rothstein 2005, Filip 2008) so that it can adequately describe the telicity facts of both English and non-English type languages. I lend support to my claims by mainly examining the aspectual behavior of Hungarian degree achievement predicates in neutral sentences (i.e. sentences not containing negation or a focused element).

3. **Figure-path relations in Hungarian.** In Hungarian telicity arises just in case a telicizing element (e.g. a particle or a resultive expression) appears in the predicate (Kardos 2011). The strongest piece of evidence for the claim that FPRs can be observed in this language is that once a telicizing element is licensed, it is obligatory for the figure argument to be quantized. If this requirement is not met, the resulting sentence is ungrammatical. Consider (2).

(2)  
   a. Mari fel-melelegített egy tányér-t.  
      M.NOM warmed a plate in 5 minutes.  
   b. *Mari fel-melelegített tányérok-at.  
      M.NOM warmed plates into

This behavior is also attested in the case of predicates containing resultative expressions, which is what (3) illustrates.

(3)  
   a. János fel-melelegített egy tányér-t.  
      J.NOM warmed a plate in 5 minutes.  
   b. *János fel-melelegített tányérok-at.  
      J.NOM warmed plates into

"János cooled the beer into ice in 5 minutes."
Further evidence emerges from the investigation of the aspectual behavior of creation/consumption predicates where telicity can arise without the licensing of a particle or a resultative expression (É. Kiss 2008). A motivated explanation for why this is case is provided in Kardos (2011), where it is argued that the telicizing element is the figure itself (just like in English) as it directly determines the (un)boundedness of the path. For arguments regarding the claim that creation/consumption predicates select for a path argument, see Beavers (2012).

4. Telicity viewed as event maximalization. Although Beavers’s (2012) analysis is along the right lines when it comes to the characterization of the quantization properties of aspectually relevant arguments (i.e. the participant that undergoes some kind of change and the path), it cannot account for the role of telicizing verbal particles and resultative expressions in Hungarian. In this language it is an intriguing fact that telicity does not arise without the licensing of a specific telicizing element (e.g. a verbal particle) despite the fact that the figure has quantized reference and the path could be interpreted with a bound on it (thanks to context). This is exemplified in (4) where atelicity arises in the absence of a telicizing particle (e.g. fel) and telicity arises in the presence thereof.

(4) a. Mari 10 perc-ig/*10 perc alatt melegített egy tányér-t.  
M.NOM 10 minute-for10 minute under warmed a plate-ACC  
'Mari warmed a plate for 10 minutes.'

b. Mari 10 perc alatt/*10 perc-ig fel-melegített egy tányér-t.  
M.NOM 10 minute under/10 minute-for PRT-warmed a plate-ACC  
'Mari warmed a plate in 10 minutes.'

In this talk I propose that this aspectual effect of Hungarian verbal particles (and resultative expressions) is due to their encoding a maximalization operator (cf. Filip 2008). I show that this operator is overt and it is characterizable in terms of taking an event-denoting predicate such that it contains a bounded path argument and a quantized figure argument and it yields a telic predicate (Kardos 2011). The main argument for this claim is twofold: First, telicity can arise if and only if a telicizing element occurs in a given predicate and second, once such an element is licensed, a telic interpretation obligatorily arises and atelicity is not an option. Hungarian contrasts with Slavic languages and English as in the case of the latter this operator can be argued to be covert. As for English, it is clear that particles (and resultative expressions) do not impose quantization restrictions on the incremental themes of a given predicate and thus they do not telicize predicates by themselves. This is clearly illustrated in (5) where the predicate is interpreted atelically in spite of its containing the particle up.

(5) Mary warmed up plates for 10 minutes/*in 10 minutes.

For arguments regarding the claim that this maximalization operator, which yields telic predicates, is covert in Slavic languages (i.e. Slavic prefixes are not overt exponents of this operator), see Filip and Rothstein (2005) and Filip (2008).

5. Conclusion. In this talk I argue for an FPR-based analysis of telicity, with the caveat that it needs to be supplemented with an event maximalization operator so that it can accommodate the telicity facts of English, Slavic languages, and Hungarian. An important observation of this research is that Hungarian verbal particles (e.g. fel in felmelegít ‘PRT-warm’) and English verbal particles (e.g. up in warm up) are characterizable in terms of having significantly different aspectual properties. While the former clearly telicize the verbal predicate in which they are contained (see (2a) and (4b)), the latter only make the path (and not the event) bounded, which is a necessary but not sufficient condition for telicity (see the example in (5)).