

Aspectual types of events

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1 Aspectual Categories

1.1 Four Aspectual Classes

- States: Homogenous, unbounded, durative
 - (1) a. Brigitte is taller than Danny/tall/angry/angrier than Sue/...
b. The light is on/off/out/broken/..
c. Danny knows the answer/that you're coming/Fred./
d. Coal and Coke are different/similar/a good combo/in competition/complementary tastes....
e. $2 + 2$ is 4/ The sum of the first n odd numbers is n squared....
f. The cat asleep/The boat is adrift./The door is ajar.
g. Your umbrella is in the hall/under the oak tree/out by the red bench/...

Homogeneous	One randomly chosen moment identical to next
Unbounded	No natural boundaries: culminations, points of change
Durative	Take up time

- Processes or activities
 - (2) a. John walked in the garden.
b. The leaves fluttered in the wind.
c. Clive pushed a supermarket trolley.

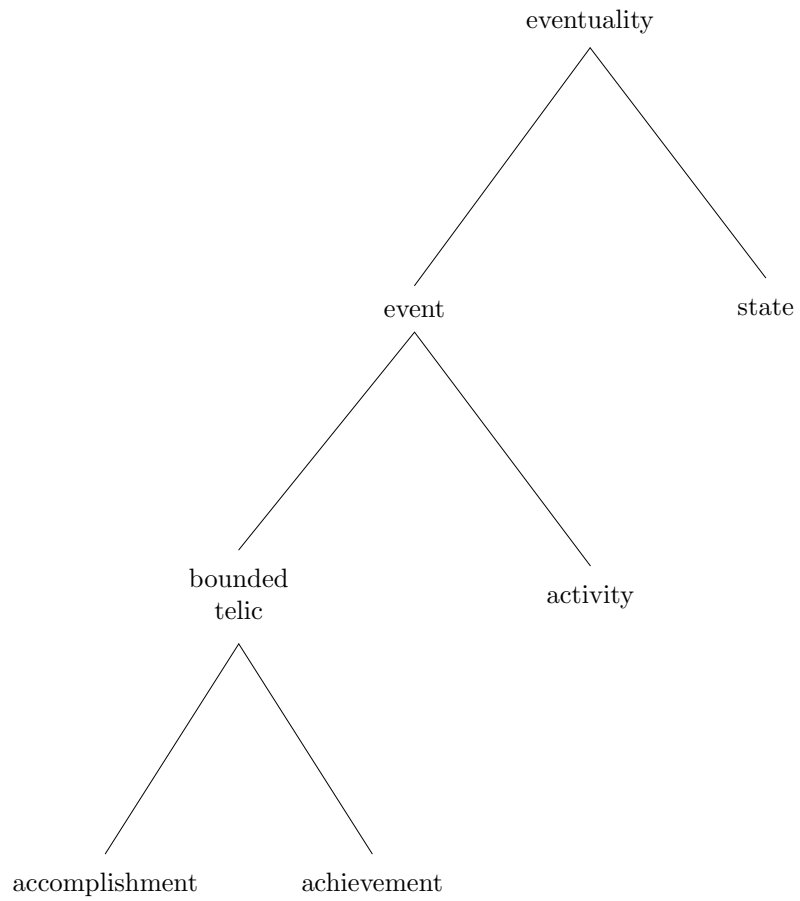


Figure 1: The tree of eventualities

- d. They chatted.
- e. Sue swam in the river.
- f. The guests played cards.

Heterogeneous Change from one moment to next
 Unbounded No natural boundaries: culminations, points of change
 Durative Take up time

- Accomplishments: Processes that lead to end points

- (3) a. John built a house.
- b. John drew a circle.
- c. Marcia ate an apple.
- d. Sue swam a mile.
- e. We did the dishes.
- f. The incumbent made a speech.

Heterogeneous Change from one moment to next
 Bounded A natural boundary: culminations, points of change
 Durative Take up time

Note: events that have sharply defined beginnings or onsets are also called bounded.

- Achievements

- (4) a. Clive realized that Deirdre was gone.
- b. He recognized her.
- c. They reached the summit.
- d. John noticed a mark on the wallpaper.
- e. Wilbon lost his temper.

Heterogeneous Describe an instant of change
 Bounded Cross a natural boundary: a point of change
 Non-Durative Take place in an instant

(5) *Summarizing:*

	Change	Duration	Bound
State	-	+	-
Achievement	+	-	+
Activity/Process	+	+	-
Accomplishment	+	+	+

Note: Boundedness also called telicity

(6) *Extending the concept:*

Boundedness is also sometimes used with respect to the count mass distinction with nouns

Countable things are bounded

Mass nouns are unbounded.

more on this later when we talk about tests

- Semelfactives (Slavic aspect): V describes a sequence of identical subevents, a single one of which counts as an instance of V.

Flickering describes a series of on/off alternations of a light source. A single on/off alternation counts as a flicker.

→

Flickering is semelfactive.

Running describes a series of steps but a single step does not count as an event of running.

→

Running is not semelfactive.

Culminations available, but no process leading up to them, like iterated achievements...

(7) a. Jubal rapped the table.

- b. Sue blinked.
- c. Heather coughed.
- d. The light flashed.
- e. The cloth fluttered. (a single flutter okay?)
- f. Harry waved.

1.2 Tests: Thank heaven

- *In* frame adverbials

(8) *Accomplishment: duration readings*

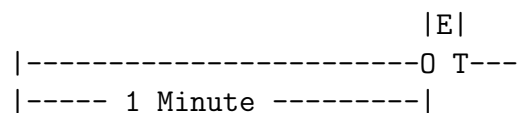
- (a) He ate the pie in 60 seconds.
- (b) They built the barn in two days.
- (c) John walked to town in 45 minutes.

- (9) *Achievement: onset readings*
- (a) He recognized her in a minute of so.
 - (b) John noticed the marks in a few minutes at most.
 - (c) Wilbon lost his temper in 3 days.
- (10) *States: onset readings*
- (a) The couple were happy in two years/will be happy in two years.
 - (b) The room was sunny in an hour/will be sunny in an hour.
 - (c) John knew him well in five years/will know him well in five years.
- (11) *Activity: no reading*
- (a) # They walked in the park in half an hour.
 - (b) # People waiting to buy tickets chatted in 5 hours.
 - (c) # Jubal pushed a supermartket trolley in 60 seconds.

Event duration versus Event onset delay

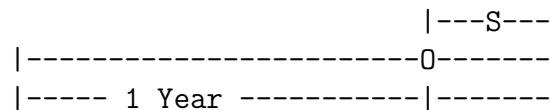
Achievement: onset delay

He noticed her in a minute.



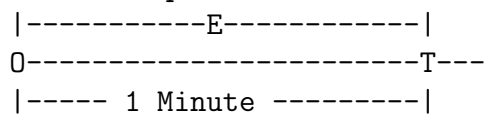
State: onset delay

They were happy in a year.



Accomplishment: Duration

He ran a quarter-mile in a minute.



- (12) *Semantically related test: It took ...*
- (a) It took a minute for him to notice her. [onset delay for achievement]
 - (b) It took a year for them to be happy. [onset delay for state]
 - (c) It took a minute for him run a quarter mile. [duration for activity]
 - (d) ? It took half an hour to walk in the park.
 - (e) ? It took 5 hours for people waiting to buy tickets to chat.
 - (f) ? It took 60 seconds for Jubal to push a supermarket trolley.
- (13) *Support for the idea of onset readings*
- (a) He began pushing the supermarket trolley at 3:01. He stopped pushing the supermarket trolley at 3:02.
 - (b) \nrightarrow He pushed the supermarket trolley in 60 seconds.
 - (c) He arrived at 3:01. He pushed the supermarket trolley in 60 seconds.
 - (d) \leftrightarrow He arrived at 3:01. He began pushing the supermarket trolley in 60 seconds.
- (14) *Future tense: onset reading throughout*
- (a) They will walk in the park in half an hour.
 - (b) People waiting to buy tickets will chat in 5 hours.
 - (c) Jubal will push a supermarket trolley in 60 seconds.
 - (d) Jubal will walk a mile in 15 minutes.[ambiguous! Duration or onset]
- (15) *Summary: in frame adverbials*
- (a) Accomplishment: duration reading always possible (even in Future)
 - (b) Activity: duration reading ungrammatical (rescue: Activity \rightarrow Accomplishment)
That evening he prayed in 10 minutes. (= said his evening prayers in 10 minutes)
 - (c) State: duration reading ungrammatical (rescue: onset reading)
 - (d) Achievement: duration reading ungrammatical (rescue: onset reading)

- *For* frame adverbials

(16) *Activities, States: For time frame adverbial*

- (a) He drew for an hour.
- (b) He walked in the park for an hour.
- (c) He smiled for an hour.
- (d) They were in Spain for two weeks.
- (e) He loved her for almost two weeks. Then, one morning at Starbuck's, ...
- (f) # He was intelligent for a year. [individual level property, a state that tends to be permanent.]

(17) *Accomplishment: For time frame adverbial*

- (a) # He drew the circle for 60 seconds.
- (b) # John walked to town for 45 minutes.
- (c) # They built the barn for two days.

(18) *Achievement: For time frame adverbial*

- (a) ? He recognized her for a minute.
- (b) ? John noticed the marks for a few minutes.
- (c) John noticed the marks for a few months. (iterated)
- (d) # Wilbon reached the summit for half an hour.

(19) *Iterated readings: Repair reading for accomplishments*

- (a) She painted the view from her window for five years.
- (b) The gang painted the bridge for ten years.

(20) *Semelfactives: Iterated readings*

- (a) John rapped the table for a minute.
- (b) Jubal blinked for a minute.
- (c) John coughed for an hour.
- (d) The light flashed for 10 minutes.

(21) *Summarizing:*

- (a) *In* frame adverbials are compatible with bounded events;
For frame adverbials are compatible with unbounded events.

- (b) Iteration is (often) a repair reading that reinterprets a bounded event as unbounded. However, with semelfactives it isn't a repair reading; it seems to be a normal lexical property. 0
- (c) Onset readings are repair readings that reinterpret unbounded events (states, activities) as bounded.

- Tense test

(22) *Non statives habitual in simple present*

- (a) Heath bikes to work.
- (b) Harry feeds the dogs.
- (c) Sue writes with a fountain pen.

(23) *Statives true present reading in simple present*

- (a) Heath knows Sue.
- (b) Harry loves the abacus
- (c) $2 + 2$ is 4.

- Progressive test

(24) *Statives unhappy in progressive*

- (a) # Jubal is knowing French.
- (b) # This box is containing all my worldly goods.
- (c) # Jubal is being in Frankfurt.

(25) *However, some get 'temporariness' reading*

- (a) We live in London.
- (b) We are living in London.
- (c) The statue stands at the entrance to the park.
- (d) The statue is standing at the entrance to the park.
- (e) John's house sits at the top of the hill.
- (f) John's house is sitting at the top of the hill. [hurricane?]
- (g) My bag of groceries is sitting at the top of the hill.