Aspect Assignment (model answers)
`http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/~gawron/aisem`

Semantics

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Overview

Exercise 1.a

1. The door creaked open.

1. The door creaked open.
2. The door creaked open for several seconds.

1. The door creaked open.
2. The door creaked open for several seconds.
3. The door creaked open in a few seconds.

1. The door creaked open.
2. The door creaked open for several seconds.
3. The door creaked open in a few seconds.
4. The door is creaking open.

Exercise 1.a

1. The door creaked open.
2. The door creaked open for several seconds.
3. The door creaked open in a few seconds.
4. The door is creaking open.
5. Conclusion: Accomplishment or Process, but this is odd since openness seems to have an endpoint (there is a such a thing as the door being completely open). Possible explanation: This sentence can mean: The door creaked further open.

Exercise 1a: Write-up

Write-up: Example (2) tells us we've got something atelic, and (3) tells us we have something telic, so this example is **ambiguous**. Example (4) tells us this is +Duration and +Dynamic, lending further support to the idea that this is either an activity or accomplishment, and not a state or achievment. Conclusion: ambiguously an accomplishment and an activity.

Exercise 1.d

1. Elsa chewed her way through half a goat.
2. Elsa chewed her way through half a goat in ten minutes.
3. ? Elsa chewed her way through half a goat for ten minutes. (How much of the goat is left at the end?)
4. Elsa was chewing her way through half a goat $\nRightarrow$ Elsa chewed her way through half a goat.
5. Conclusion: Accomplishment, possibly a process, too, if you accept (3).

Exercise 1d write-up

This is at least questionable with a *for*-phrase duration modifier and okay with *in*-phrase duration modifier. Both results point to this being telic. Further support for (1) being telic comes from the fact that it lacks the subinterval property, as shown in (4). The progressive sentence does **not** entail the non progressive. So it's justifiable to call it telic. It's also okay with the progressive, so it's not a state or achievement.

1. Liam picked at his food.
2. Liam picked at his food for hours.
3. # Liam picked at his food in 10 minutes.
4. Liam was picking at his food $\Rightarrow$ Liam picked at his food.
5. Conclusion: Process.

This is okay with a *for*-phrase duration modifier and not okay with *in*-phrase duration modifier. So it's atelic. It's also okay with the progressive, so it's not a state. That points to beng a process. Further support for its being a process comes from the fact that it has the subinterval property, shown in (4). The progressive sentence entails the non progressive.

1. Donald heated the solution.
2. Donald heated the solution for hours.
3. Donald heated the solution in 10 minutes.
4. Donald was heating the solution $\Rightarrow$ Donald heated the solution (=caused it to become hotter); Donald was heating the solution $\not\Rightarrow$ Donald heated the solution (=caused it to become hot);
5. Conclusion: Ambiguous between process/activity and accomplishment.

This is okay with a *for*-phrase duration modifier and okay with *in*-phrase duration modifier. So it's ambigiguously atelic (− Telic) and telic (+ Telic). It's also okay with the progressive, so it's not a state. Further support for its being acceptable both with an end point and with no endpoint, comes from the fact that it has the subinterval property, shown in (4), with one reading, and fails to have the subinterval property with the other reading.

1. Donald heated the solution to 70 degrees.
2. # Donald heated the solution to 70 degrees for hours.
3. Donald heated the solution to 70 degrees in 10 minutes.
4. Donald was heating the solution to 70 degrees $\not\Rightarrow$ Donald heated the solution to 70 degrees.
5. Conclusion: Accomplishment.

Exercise 2.c write up

This is not okay with a *for*-phrase duration modifier and okay with *in*-phrase duration modifier. So it's unambiguously telic (+ Telic). It's also okay with the progressive, so it's not a state. That points to being an accomplishment. Further support for its being an accomplishement comes from the fact that it does not have the subinterval property, shown in (4). The difference between this example and the last is the PP *to 70 degrees*, so adding that PP defines an endpoint, and makes the sentence unambiguously telic.

1. A shabby warehouse complex came into view.
2. A shabby warehouse complex came into view for a few moments.
3. A shabby warehouse complex came into view in a few moments.
4. After a few moments, a shabby warehouse complex came into view.
5. A shabby warehouse complex was coming into view. ($\not\Rightarrow$ A shabby warehouse came into view.)
6. Conclusion: Culmination achievement. Or accomplishment. With salient resultant state.

Exercise 3.a write up

Example (b) shows (a) is okay with a *for*-phrase duration modifier add and (c) shows (a) is **also** okay with *in*-phrase modifier. But the *for*-phrase tells us not how long the coming into view process lasted, but the length of the **resultant** state. So this example does **not** show (a) is −Telic. Similarly, the *in*-phrase in (c) has an event delay reading, (which is paraphrased by (d)), and that reading of (c) does **not** show (a) is + Telic. But there also seems to be a true process duration reading for (c), which **would** should (a) is + Telic. This is supported by the failed entailment in (e), which is characteristic of +Telic clauses. Finally the progressive in (e) is okay. It would be consistent with these facts to say **either** that (a) is an accomplishment or that it is a culmination achievement (allows the progressive like *reaching the summit*).

Exercise 3.b

1. Anna was cracking nuts. (already in the progressive!)
2. Anna was cracking nuts for hours/ Anna cracked nuts for hours.
3. \# Anna was cracking nuts in 10 minutes/ \#Anna cracked nuts in 10 minutes
4. Anna was cracking nuts $\Rightarrow$ Anna cracked nuts
5. Conclusion: Process/Activity.

Exercise 3.b writeup

This is okay with a *for*-phrase duration modifier and not okay with *in*-phrase duration modifier, and the judgments don't change if you take away the progressive. So it's atelic ($-$ Telic). It's also okay with the progressive, so it's not a state. Further support for its being a process comes from the fact that it has the subinterval property, shown in (4). The progressive sentence entails the non progressive.

1. Anna cracked nuts with a hammer.
2. Anna cracked nuts with a hammer for hours.
3. # Anna was cracking nuts with a hammer in 10 minutes.
4. Anna was cracking nuts with a hammer $\Rightarrow$ Anna cracked nuts with a hammer.
5. Conclusion: Process/Activity.

This is okay with a *for*-phrase duration modifier and not okay with *in*-phrase duration modifier. So it's atelic ($-$ Telic). It's also okay with the progressive, so it's not a state. Further support for its being a process comes from the fact that it has the subinterval property, shown in (4). The progressive sentence entails the non progressive.

It's possible toconclude that this clause is semelfactive, beacuse it describes a group of identical resettable events (each nut cracking), but it's a little odd. The semelfactive property is due to the use of the indefinite *nuts*, which allows there to be an unbounded number of nut-cracking sub-events. The term semelfactive is usually reserved for cases like *blink* and *flash*, where the verb meaning, rather than a mass noun object, allows for am unbounded number of identical events.

1. Anna cracked the nuts with a hammer.
2. ? Anna cracked the nuts with a hammer for hours.
3. Anna cracked the nuts with a hammer in 10 minutes.
4. Anna was cracking the nuts with a hammer $\not\Rightarrow$ Anna cracked the nuts with a hammer.
5. Conclusion: Process/Activity.

Exercise 3.d write up

This is not okay with a *for*-phrase duration modifier and okay with *in*-phrase duration modifier. So it's telic ($+$ Telic). It's also okay with the progressive, so it's not a state. Further support for its being telic comes from the fact that it does not have the subinterval property, shown in (4). The progressive sentence does entail the non progressive, because when there is a definite quantity of nuts, the non-rpogressive version of the sentence seems to require that she cracked **all** the nuts. That is, describing the nuts witha definite plural (*the nuts*) again seems to define an endpoint for the action.

The contrast betwen (3c) and (3d) is important. Changing one of the NPs from indefinite (*nuts*) to definite (*the nuts*) can definitely affect the aspectual classification of the clause. That is why it's a mistake to call a **verb** telic or atelic.