

## *Scale coercion and the progressive form of achievements*

Progressive achievements, traditionally regarded as unacceptable, came to be generally treated as a case of *event coercion* (Moens and Steedman, 1988; Rothstein, 2004). The existing accounts, however, fail to predict when a particular achievement may appear in the progressive. I propose that what is coerced is the *scale of change* associated with the eventuality, rather than its event type, which allows for a more constrained analysis of progressive achievements.

Following Hay et al. (1999) and Beavers (2008), I will argue that the *structural properties* of the scale associated with the change described by an eventuality account for its aspectual properties. First, I will draw on the conception of telicity as the existence of a lower bound on the amount of change undergone during the course of an eventuality, proposed by Hay et al. (1999). Second, I will follow Beavers (2008) in assuming that gradable predicates are associated with a multi-valued scale, while non-gradable predicates with a binary scale.

Building upon these two assumptions, I will show how the well-known aspectual classes may be derived in such a way that the resulting classification respects subtle structural differences among achievements, justifying thus the need for differentiating between various *subtypes of achievements*, recognized by a few event ontologies, such as Bach (1986); Dini and Bertinetto (1995); Kearns (2003).

I will also propose a *scalar approach to the progressive* and the perfective. An event in progress will be conceived of as having the possibility to continue to higher degrees on the associated scale to become a full-fledged eventuality of the relevant type. The imperfective paradox can then be shown to arise for telic events, but not for activities. What the lexical entry for verbs specifies with respect to aspect is the *number of degrees* of their scale of change: 1 (states), 2 (achievements), or more than 2 (activities, accomplishments).

Under the conception of Beavers (2008), then, accomplishments describe a gradable change, achievements a non-gradable change. What I propose is that the progressive can coerce a *binary scale into a multi-valued one* via the presence of a lexically or pragmatically given “cover event” (which itself involves a gradual change), *or via shifting to a finer level of granularity* (cf. Sauerland and Stateva, 2007), at which a durationless event is no longer durationless.<sup>1</sup> For instance, a slow-motion recording of an explosion reveals mereological structure that is not present at the default level of granularity.

This analysis explains many puzzling properties of progressive achievements (cf. Dowty 1979; Piñón 1997; Rothstein 2004), such as why they behave as accomplishments with respect to the progressive, but as achievements with respect to expressions like *halfway*: the progressive operator refers to scale structure, which, following coercion, is like that of accomplishments, while *halfway* refers to the duration of the eventuality, which is zero for achievements.

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<sup>1</sup>This supports the intuition of Verkuyl (1989) of achievements as a type of accomplishment, while retaining the distinction between these aspectual categories.