The Syntax of Inner Aspect in Hungarian
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Aims and claims: The aim of this talk is to argue for the syntactic representation of inner aspect in Hungarian. In line with previous literature on the syntax of inner aspectual markers across languages (Ritter & Rosen 2005; MacDonald 2008; Travis 2010), we propose that Hungarian also has an aspectual functional projection (AspP) within the verbal domain sandwiched between VP and vP. AspP is directly responsible for the aspectual interpretations that we refer to as weak telicity effects, induced by subcategorized measuring-out objects (Tenny 1994) of creation/consumption predicates (CCOs) and non-subcategorized pseudo objects (POs). In addition, we also argue for a second aspectual functional projection (AspP_{MAX}) above vP, which is directly responsible for strong telicity effects induced by verbal particles (VPrts) and result predicates (RPs). Support for our analysis comes from word order properties, scope facts, and the presence and absence of aspectual variability.

Previous literature: On the one hand, É. Kiss (2008) claims that CCOs are merged in a postverbal position and it is their lexical semantics that contributes to (a)telic interpretations. On the other hand, Csirmaz (2008) argues that POs move to [Spec, PredP] when they precede the verb, similarly to VPrts and RPs, which have also been claimed to be merged in the complement zone of V as arguments of V (É. Kiss 2008; Surányi 2009) or small clause predicates (Hegedűs & Dékány 2017), from which they undergo movement first to [Spec, PredP] (inside vP) and then to [Spec, TP] (outside vP) (Surányi 2009). In these analyses it is the predicative nature of VPrts/RPs and POs that triggers their movement in the verbal domain; their inner aspectual contribution is only a semantic matter. The novelty of our work is that it offers a unified analysis of the telicity facts associated with CCOs, POs and VPrts stressing the idea that the different aspectual interpretations arise due to the specific syntactic configurations associated with these elements.

Analysis: Created/consumed objects: CCOs in Hungarian, similarly to English, German, Dutch and Spanish, can measure out events when associated with quantized reference (É. Kiss 2008; Kardos 2016). Crucially, however, these objects can just as easily give rise to atelic interpretations, as shown in (1).

(1) Mari 10 perc alatt /10 percig evett egy almát.
   Mary 10 minute under 10 minute.for eat.PST an apple.ACC
   ‘Mary ate an apple in/for 10 minutes.’

We propose that, as subcategorized, thematic and referential internal arguments, CCOs merge in the canonical direct object position in [Spec, VP] and move from the base-generated logical object position ([Spec, VP]) to the derived object position ([Spec, AspP]) to receive accusative case (MacDonald 2008; Travis 2010). This one-stage derivation is also characterized by the verb undergoing head movement from V to (at least) v (see (2)):

(2) [TP T [AspP_{MAX} AspP_{MAX} [vP v·V [AspIP CCO AspP [vP CCO V]]]]]

That atelic interpretations are also available with objects whose quantity is known is in line with recent observations in the literature, according to which aspectual markers attached lower in the syntactic structure are associated with a cancellable telicity (Travis 2010). Once a particle appears in the predicate, however, which is, as we argue, merged in a higher position, telicity is not cancellable (Kardos 2016). Another property that characterizes predicates whose telicity is calculated low in the structure is that they are associated with a simple event structure, as evidenced by their non-ambiguous counterfactual reading when they appear with the adverb majdnem ‘almost’ (Piñón 2008).

Pseudo objects: The PO egyet ‘one.ACC’, similarly to other POs such as (egy) jót ‘(one) good.ACC’ or nagyokat ‘big.PL.ACC’, is a non-subcategorized and non-thematic Accusative constituent with no referential value. It is a situation delimiter (Csirmaz 2008) re categorizing the atelic VP Mari sétált ‘Mary walked’ into an unambiguously telic VP (3b). Farkas & Kardos (2018) argue that these POs encode an aspectual operator that picks out a contextually specified non-maximal subpart of the event in the denotation of the predicate. They give rise to an interpretation that corresponds to the generation or introduction of an event (É. Kiss 2004; Csirmaz 2008), the spatial and temporal extent of which is context-dependent. That is, in (3b), for instance, it is necessary to appeal to context in order to account for the precise spatial extent and runtime of the event of walking.
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Some accomplishments, like ... are outside vP, which is supported by coordination facts (É. Kiss 2002). That VPrt and RPs are outside vP is, for example, evidenced by VP ellipsis and RNR facts (see Surányi 2009).

(5) Mari 10 perc alatt/*10 perci pirostra /le-festett egy kerítést/*kerítéseket.
Mary 10 minute under/10 minute for red.into PRT-paint.PST a fence.ACC fences.ACC

'Mary painted a fence/Mary painted a fence red in 10 minutes.'

An important consequence of event maximalizing elements in [Spec, Asp₂P_maxₑ] is that they impose semantic constraints over their theme in their c-command domain such that it must be specific (5). Unlike predicates containing POs and CCOs, predicates containing VPrt and RPs are associated with a complex event structure, which is shown by their ambiguous (counterfactual and incomplete) interpretations in the presence of the adverbial majdnem ‘almost’ (Piñon 2008).

Some consequences of the analysis: The proposal predicts the co-occurrence restrictions between POs and CCOs: the semantic incompatibility between the two objects is completed by syntactic facts: the movement of the CCO from [Spec, VP] to [Spec, Asp₁P] is blocked by the PO, which is merged in the same position (cf. *evett egyet egy almát ‘ate one.ACC an apple.ACC’). Another consequence of this analysis is the strictly telic interpretation of predicates containing both a VPrt and a quantized CCO, as in meg-evett egy almát ‘VPrt-ate an apple’ (cf. (1)). A third consequence is that although the co-occurrence of POs and VPrt is syntactically allowed, as attested in Transylvanian Hungarian (cf. le-futott egyet a partra ‘VPrts-ran one.ACC the river bank.to’), the non-maximal vs. maximal event interpretations associated with these telicity markers give rise to a semantic incompatibility in standard Hungarian.

Conclusion: In Hungarian the class of telicity markers is heterogeneous. This aspectual heterogeneity is not only a semantic matter, but is also reflected in the syntactic representation of the Hungarian sentence. The derivation of structures containing VPrt and RPs is also characterized by the V’s movement to v and then to (at least) Asp₂P_maxₑ, which is supported by coordination facts (É. Kiss 2002). That VPrt and RPs are outside vP is, for example, evidenced by VP ellipsis and RNR facts (see Surányi 2009).

(6) [TP T [Asp₂P_maxₑ VPrt/RP Asp₂P_maxₑ → V [V → V [Asp₁P Asp₁ [VP V]]]]]

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