

# Inner Aspect and Phases

Jonathan E. MacDonald - *Stony Brook University*  
macdonald.jon@gmail.com

- Elements that contribute to the aspectual interpretation of a predicate are below AspP, a projection between vP and VP
- The calculation of these elements takes place at vP, at the phase

## 1. AspP between vP and VP

• **Evidence:** Distinct aspectual distributions and interpretations of mass nouns (MNs) and bare plurals (BPs)

### MNs elicit atelic interpretation

- (1) Frank carried **sand** onto the tarp for an hour. → **atelic**
- (2) Frank carried a bag onto **sand** for an hour. → **\*atelic**
- (3) **Wildlife** carried a bag onto the tarp for an hour. → **\*atelic**

### BPs elicit Sequence of Similar Events (SSE) interpretation

- (4) Frank carried **bags** onto the tarp for an hour. → **SSE**
- (5) Frank carried a bag onto **tarps** for an hour. → **SSE**
- (6) **Dogs** carried a bag onto the tarp for an hour. → **\*SSE**

### BPs are compatible with time span, MNs are not

- (7) a. Frank ate **pizzas** in 15 seconds (for an hour straight).
- b. Frank ate **pizza** #in 15 seconds (for an hour straight).
- (8) a. Frank carried **bags** onto the tarp in 10 seconds (for an hour straight).
- b. Frank carried **sand** onto the tarp #in 10 seconds (for an hour straight).

• **Proposal:** AspP between vP and VP (see also Travis 1991, 2005); BPs move to Spec,AspP and MNs Agree with Asp<sup>o</sup>

### Island for BP movement:

- (9) Bill ate the box of cookies for an hour. → **\*SSE**
- (10) Bill built a row of houses for a week. → **\*SSE**

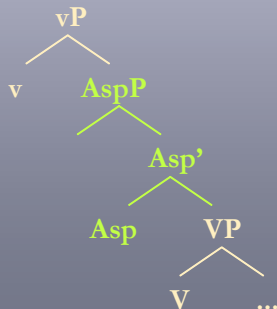
Agree with Asp<sup>o</sup> = object-to-event mapping; [+/-q] feature of NP values Asp<sup>o</sup> (*q* for *quantized* (Krifka 1989)/*specific quantity of A* (Verkuyl 1972))

### [+q]NP → telic interpretation:

- (11) Larry ate a **pizza** in ten minutes/#for ten minutes.

### [-q]NP → atelic interpretation:

- (12) Larry ate **pizza** #in ten minutes/for ten minutes.



## 2. Domain of Aspectual Interpretation

• **Evidence:** CAUSE, external arguments, and location PPs do not contribute to aspectual interpretation and are all above AspP

**CAUSE:** cause predicate does not affect aspectual ambiguity of degree achievements (Hay, Kennedy & Levin (1999)

- (13) a. The soup cooled for an hour/in an hour.  
b. The empire expanded for a week/in a week.
- (14) a. John cooled the soup for an hour/in an hour.  
b. The king expanded the empire for a week/in an week.

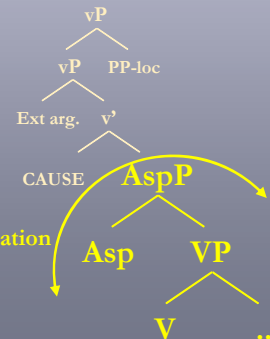
**External Arguments:** External arguments do not contribute to aspectual interpretation of predicate. MNs do not elicit atelic interpretation (3); BPs do not elicit SSE interpretation (6). See also Tenny 1987.

**Locative PPs:** they do not elicit telic interpretation of predicate (cf. goals (16), see also Tungseth (2002) for Norwegian)

- (15) a. John drove the car **at the park** for an hour/#in an hour.  
b. John carried the bag **on the boat** for an hour/#in an hour.
- (16) a. John drove the car **to the park** #for an hour/in an hour.  
b. John carried the bag **onto the boat** #for an hour/in an hour.

• **Proposal:** Only elements dominated by AspP can contribute to aspectual interpretation of predicate

### Domain of Aspectual Interpretation



## 3. Calculation of Aspect at the Phase

• **Evidence:** External argument controls [+/-] feature of PRO below AspP introduced by a secondary predicate

**External Argument** seems to control telicity of predicate

- (17) a. **Bill** walked into the forest #for an hour/in an hour.  
b. **Wildlife** walked into the forest for an hour/#in an hour.

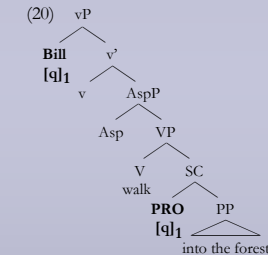
**Internal Argument** actually controls telicity

- (18) a. Bill walked **Frank** into the forest #for an hour/in an hour.  
b. Bill walked **livestock** into the forest for an hour/#in an hour.

**Internal Argument** is introduced by secondary predicate

- (19) a. \*Bill walked Frank.  
b. \*Bill walked the letter.

**Conclusion:** Subject controls PRO introduced by secondary predicate (see also Ritter & Rosen 1998); external argument controls the [q] feature of PRO



• **Proposal:** Aspect not calculated at least until subject is merged, until vP, until the phase

