

Models of polysemy of semelfactive and limitative markers in languages of the world

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Preface

- Derivational category with following features: perfectivity, no outcome
- Meaning is in a way similar to perfective aspect, but is strictly derivational
- The main aim of the present study is to provide a general description of this category in a first approach, to define a set of meanings

Semelfactive

- Derivation that marks a **quant**, extracted from a multiplicative process, with **no internal structure**
- Other approaches:
- [Smith 1997:29-30], [Croft 2012] ("cyclic achievement"), [Comrie 1976: 42-43]: Not derivational meaning, but "situation type". "Semelfactives are the simplest type of event, consisting only in the occurrence."; not necessarily paired with multiplicative;
- [Xrakovskij 1998]: considers also lexical underived "semelfactives"

(De)limitative

- Derivation that extracts a segment from a process
- [Dickey, Hutcheson 2003]: "perfective procedural verbs that express the occurrence of an activity for some "short" or indefinite period of time... unlike prototypical perfective verb, delimitatives are atelic"
- [Plungian 2011: 296]: aspectual meaning similar to punctual situations, but different Aktionsart

Antireresultativity

- [Plungian 2011: 371]: semantics of unreached or cancelled result
- Chuvash [Shluinskij 2005] (analytic construction with *ilčë*):

šiv tumla-sa il-čë-ě.
water drip-CONV take-PST-3
'A water dripped (once).'

pětěr tavrān-sa il-čë-ě.
Peter come.back-CONV take-PST-3
'Peter came back and left again'.

Inchoative

- Inchoative is a secondary meaning of the considered markers
- Frequently such interpretation of semelfactive / limitative markers is possible only for verbs of states / verbs of motion (cf. Nanai [Oskolskaja, Stojnova 2012])
- Moksha [Makarchuk 2016]

štana-t'n'ə sen'əptə-s' tε
pants-DEF.PL turn.blue-PST.3SG that
mus'k-in'ə akšə-ksc'-t' (< akšə 'white')
wash-PST.3.O.1SG.S white-SMLF.PST.3-PL
'Pants became blue, I washed them, they **became white**'.

- Russian
Limitative: *играть* 'to play' – *поиграть* 'to play for a while'
Inchoative: *бежать* 'to run' – *побежать* 'to start running'
белеть 'be.white' – *побелеть* 'to become white'

Attenuative

- Not an aspectual meaning; low intensity of action [Plungian 2011: 159]
- Differs from short duration / high velocity, but correlates with it
- Russian: intensifying adverbs are possible with verbs, where *-Hy* has a semelfactive interpretation, but not attenuative

сильно толкнул 'he pushed hard', but *зроромко всплакнул* 'he shed a tear loudly'

- Besermyan [Serdobolskaja 2012]:
pol-z-e gəl-t-əñ ə
floor-3-ACC rinse-SMLF-INF
'Wipe the floor (quickly, wipe with a rag once)'.

- Chinese [Li & Thompson 1989]: Limitative is likely to occur in requests, when one wishes to soften a request

Suddenness

- Something happening unexpectedly
- Finnish [Karlsson 1999], [Puura 2010]:
Semelfactive: *haukku-a* 'to bark' > *haukk-ah-ta-a* 'to bark (once)'
Suddenness: *cseiso-a* 'stop (tr.)' and *seis-ah-ta-a* 'suddenly stop, stand still'
- Tunra Nenets [Kortveli 2005]:
syurcy 'spin' > *syurxolcy* 'turn suddenly'

Quickness and Chukchi

- [Plungian 2000]: *быстро* 'quickly' is considered as lexical analogue for Russian semelfactive *-Hy*
- It seems that 'quickness' rather modifies duration of a process while saving internal structure, when the considered category also operates with internal structure
- Cf. Chukchi [own field data]: special derivational marker, denoting high velocity, suddenness

wəkwə-tʃə-n wiri-sqəset-γʔ-i
stone-SING-NOM.SG roll.down-RAPID-TH-2/3SG.S
'A stone rolled down quickly'.
qepəʔ pətkəntetə-sqəset-γʔ-i
ball burst-RAPID-TH-2/3SG.S
'A ball suddenly burst'.

	SMLF	LIM	INCH	ATTEN	ANTIRES	"suddenness"
Russian (-Hy)						
Russian (no-)						
Chuvash						
Nanai						
Mandarin						
Moksha						
Finnish						
Tundra Nenets						
Konso						
Besermyan (-t)						
Besermyan (-č'k)						
Veps						

Nanai [Oskolskaja, Stojnova 2012]

- Semelfactive: with multiplicative processes
ŋoače-pseŋ-ke-ni
bark-INCH2-PST-P.3SG
'He barked (once)'.
- Inchoative: with verbs of motion
tutu-psij-ki-ni
run-INCH2-PST-P.3SG
'He has started running'.
- Limitative + short duration: with atelic processes
ao-pseŋ-ke-ni
sleep-INCH2-PST-P.3SG
'He took a nap'.
- Incomplete: with some telic processes
žare-pseŋ-ke-ni
sing-INCH2-PST-P.3SG
'She sang a part of the song'.
- Attenuative: with some processes and states
ičə-psij-ki-ni
see-INCH2-PST-P.3SG
'He took a glance / He peeped'.

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Chuvash [Shluinskij 2005]

- Analytic "attenuative" construction with *ilčë*
- Limitative
pětěr virt-sa il-čë-ě.
Peter lie-CONV take-PST-3
'Peter was lying for a while'.
- Attenuative
ivan cirle-se il-čë-ě.
Ivan be.ill-CONV take-PST-3
'Ivan was a little sick'.
- Semelfactive: with multiplicative processes
šiv tumla-sa il-čë-ě.
water drip-CONV take-PST-3
'A water dripped (once)'.
- Cancelled result: with telic, punctive verbs
ača šjuxal-sa il-čë-ě.
child get.lost-CONV take-PST-3
'The child was lost and found'.

Some remarks

- Lowering of transitivity: Limitative marker in Russian and Czech [Dickey, Hutcheson 2003]
- Frozen forms with semantics more close to simple perfective (cf. Russian)
- Some languages have several markers with almost identical semantics, but different distribution, e.g. Finnish with two semelfactive markers – one for transitive verbs and one for intransitive [Puura 2010]
- Seem to form a separate derivational category with semelfactive / limitative meaning as central; but terms semelfactive and limitative do not reflect properly category's semantics
- Paths of diachronical development are not very transparent
- It is not always clear how to distinguish different interpretations of a marker from implicatures (e.g. attenuativity, short duration)