

This talk is on the syntax of lexical aspect. I take the distribution of bare plurals and mass nouns as support for the presence of an aspectual head between vP and VP with which mass nouns establish an Agree relation. A result of this proposal is that case and aspect are two distinct relations independent of each other.

It is generally assumed that bare plurals (BPs) and mass nouns (MNs) affect the inner aspect of a predicate in the same way (see Borer 2004, Pustejovsky 1991 among others). Observe that telic predicates are generally incompatible with durative phrases (1a), but in the presence of a MN or BP direct object, they are compatible (1b). BP and MN direct objects seem both to elicit an atelic interpretation of the predicate. Observe also that MN and BP subjects do not license the durative (1c). These data have been taken as evidence that BPs and MNs have the same aspectual distribution and interpretation.

However, in PP-accomplishments (accomplishments formed by the addition of a goal PP), BPs and MNs show distinct aspectual distributions. As direct objects, both BPs and MNs license the durative phrase (2a). However, as complements of the goal preposition, only BPs license the durative (2b), MN complements do not (2c). Moreover, note that BPs and MNs result in distinct aspectual interpretations as well. Observe in (3a) that the BP is compatible with a punctual phrase (e.g. *in 5 seconds*), under the interpretation that every bottle of soda John drank, he drank it in 5 seconds for the first week at camp. In contrast, the MN allows no such interpretation (3b). Punctual phrases are assumed to be compatible only with telic predicates (see Dowty 1979, Tenny 1994 etc.). As such, I conclude that MN direct objects result in an atelic interpretation of the predicate; i.e. the event does not necessarily come to an endpoint. In contrast, BPs result in a telic interpretation of the predicate, i.e. the event comes to an endpoint, often over and over again.

To account for the distinct aspectual distributions of BPs and MNs, I argue for an aspectual head (Asp^o) between vP and VP (4) (see also Travis 1991) with which MNs and BPs establish distinct relations. I claim that MNs Agree with Asp^o while BPs move to Spec,AspP. Support for the movement of BPs comes from so-called partitive constructions, which behave like islands for BP movement; BPs cannot move out to Spec,AspP, and consequently cannot license the durative phrase (5).

I assume that Agreement with Asp^o is the syntactic mechanism by which the nominal domain maps to the verbal predicate domain (i.e. an event-object homomorphism a la Krifka 1989). If the nominal valuing Asp^o is *quantized* (e.g. *the T.V.*), Asp^o is valued such that the predicate can be interpreted as telic. If the nominal is *non-quantized* (i.e. *cumulative*) (e.g. *soda*), Asp^o is valued such that the predicate is interpreted as atelic.

Furthermore, contrary to many assumptions (see Borer 2004, Filip 1999 among others), I claim that the feature involved in the event-object homomorphism is a feature of N^o, not D^o. Data to support this is given in (6). In the context of a party in which there were three kegs of beer from the same brewery, and the next day someone questions the quality of the beer, (6a) can be uttered. The durative phrase is compatible although there is a definite determiner (Jackendoff 1996 and Nishida 1994 make similar observations). If the compatibility with the durative resulted from a particular type of determiner, then in principle we should be able to use this determiner with all NPs. However, this is not the case. In (6b) there is no context in which the durative phrase is licensed by *the bicycle*. We can explain these facts if we assume that it is the NP itself that bears a non-quantized feature in (6a) (i.e. *beer*) and bears a quantized feature in (6b) (i.e. *bicycle*), not the DP.

An immediate and promising consequence of these data and this analysis is that case and aspect are independent relations (cf. Borer 1994, 2004, Ramchand 1997 among others). Within Chomsky (2001), case is a relation between a DP and v^o or T^o, and within the present proposal, inner aspect is a relation between an NP and Asp^o; these are two different relations involving two different sets of categories and features. This independence is supported by the passive counterparts of the constructions in (1). Observe that they show the same aspectual patterns with respect to the licensing of the durative phrase (7); yet, the nominal affecting the aspectual interpretation is in accusative in the active constructions (1) and in nominative in the passive constructions (7). Although v^o is no longer involved in case valuing in the passive construction, Asp^o is still involved in aspectual valuing. This is only possible if case and aspect are independent relations.

I have argued that there is an aspectual head (Asp^o) between vP and VP; BPs move into its specifier position while MNs Agree with Asp^o. Moreover, I have argued that the (non-)quantized feature that values Asp^o is a feature on N^o, not D^o. A necessary consequence of this proposal is that case and aspect are two distinct relations independent of each other.

