

Two Aspectual Puzzles in Saisiyat

1. Aims of the Paper

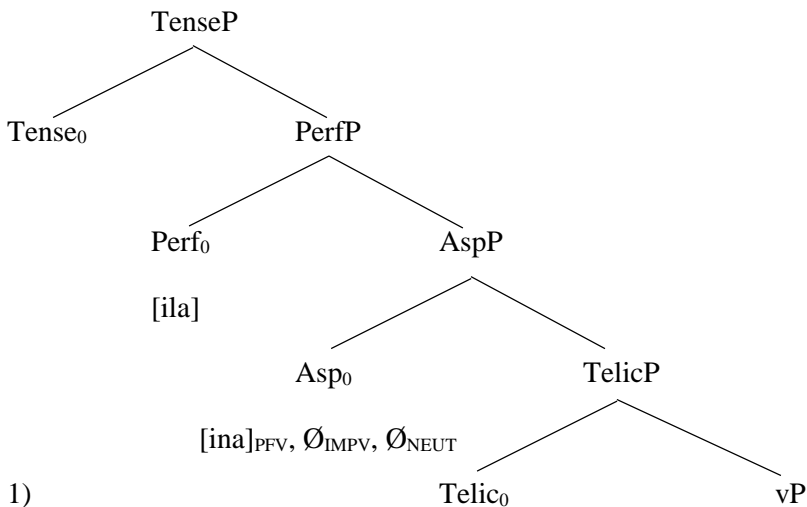
- To clarify the meaning of the aspect marker [ila] in Saisiyat
 - o [ila] has not yet been examined in depth
 - Yeh (2002) labels [ila] an ‘inceptive’ marker
 - Huang (2003) labels [ila] a ‘change-of-state’ marker
 - Neither study argues for their labelling of [ila], and both give it only a cursory mention
 - o I also clarify the meaning of a different aspect marker [ina]
- To investigate both viewpoint and situation aspect in Saisiyat more generally
 - o I especially focus on how telicity is expressed

2. New Findings

- [ila] is a perfect marker
 - o [ila] combines freely with lower viewpoint aspect operators (e.g., perfective [ina], future nonperfective [am], past nonperfective [ima], continuative [CVC-])
 - The ability of [ila] to combine with these other markers shows that [ila] occurs in a higher head position (i.e., the Perfect head)
 - o The behavior of [ila] with temporal adverbials and viewpoint aspect markers is more amenable to an Extended Now account of the perfect (e.g., McCoard 1978) than an Aktionsart account (e.g., Parsons 1990)
 - Following Iatridou et al (2001), I argue that [ila] sets up a Perfect Time Span (PTS), whose Right Boundary (RB) is the reference time and Left Boundary (LB) is set by an (overt or covert) temporal adverbial
 - Viewpoint aspect markers relate the situation time and its boundaries to the PTS
 - o [ila] gives some readings (e.g., the inchoative) that are absent from perfects in other languages, e.g., English
 - Inchoative readings have recently been found for perfect markers in Niuean (Matthewson et al 2012)
 - o I ascribe the difference in the availability of readings with the perfect to other factors (e.g., the presence or absence of covert operators), while retaining a unified semantics of the perfect (see Pancheva and von Stechow (2003) for different behavior of English and German perfects with certain time adverbials)
- [ina] is a perfective marker
 - o [ina] always includes the final endpoint of the eventuality associated with the predicate within viewpoint time
 - o Eventualities (both stative and dynamic, telic and atelic) with [ina] have always terminated before speech time
 - I posit that the perfective viewpoint in Saisiyat gets past tense interpretation as a default (Smith 1991)

- Telicity is not encoded by the predicate (Verb + Object) in Saisiyat
 - o Predicates that might be expected to be telic do not (necessarily) give culminative readings with the perfective marker [ina]
 - The ability to give non-culminative readings with bounded viewpoint aspect shows that these predicates do not encode culminativity in themselves (i.e., by the composition of the verb and its object)
 - I do not choose the option in Smith (1991), that the perfective marker itself only marks terminativity and not boundedness in general, as this complicates the meaning of the perfective marker
 - o Instead, telicity is encoded by the presence of an independent syntactic head (e.g., Travis 2000, Kratzer 2003)
 - The telic operator in Saisiyat is silent, and its occurrence is optional
 - The optionality of this operator allows for terminative readings with [ina]
 - o However, [ila] requires the presence of this telic operator
 - Combining the same predicates above with [ila] does give culminative readings

- Following common practice (e.g, Chomsky 1957, Travis 1992, Iatridou et al 2001), I place the Perfect head below Tense and above outer (viewpoint) Aspect, and the Telic (inner Aspect) head below viewpoint Aspect



- For predicates that cannot be supposed semantically to indicate culmination, the telic operator required by [ila] derives inchoatives
 - o Telic morphology is commonly used to derive inchoatives from atelic predicates crosslinguistically (Smith 1991 for Russian and Mandarin, Filip (1997) for Czech, Travis 2000 for Malagasy)
 - o While perfective morphology also can derive inchoatives from atelic predicates crosslinguistically (Iatridou et al 2001 for Bulgarian and Greek), the perfect [ina] does not do so in Saisiyat
 - This may be due to the inability of statives to occur in the perfective aspect in many languages, while they can do so in Saisiyat
 - o This may point to a parameter in indication of inchoativity across languages (i.e., either a perfective or a telic morpheme may do so)

- Saisiyat has two silent viewpoint aspect operators: imperfective and neutral
 - o The choice between these two markers creates the ambiguity between inchoative and universal perfect readings when [ila] combines with states and activities that cannot give a culminative reading
 - o With the imperfective operator, both endpoints of the (resulting) state occur outside the viewpoint time, which, with the Perfect operator [ila], is the PTS (2)

2) PTS: LB -----RB (RT)

Ø_{IMPV}: (I) ----- (F)

- o The individual denoted by the subject has entered into the state before the LB, and continues in the state after the RB (i.e., reference time)
 - This gives the universal perfect reading “has been X (and still is)”
- o With the neutral operator, the initial endpoint and at least one following point are within the viewpoint time, i.e., the PTS (3)

3) PTS: LB -----RB (RT)

Ø_{NEUT}: I – (----->)

- o The individual denoted by the subject enters into the state at point I, inside the PTS, and continues in the state for all least some and perhaps all of the remaining PTS
 - This gives the inchoative reading “has become X”

- When [ina] and [ila] co-occur, the result is an existential perfect reading
 - o With the perfective [ina], both endpoints of the (resulting) state occur within the PTS

4) PTS: LB -----RB (RT)

[ina]_{PFV}: I -----F

- o The individual denoted by the subject enters into the state at point I and exits the state at point F, both inside the PTS, and thus is not in the state at RT
 - This gives the existential perfect reading “has been X (once, but no longer)”

3. Evidence: Two Aspectual Puzzles

- The above definition of [ila] as a perfect marker that requires a silent telic operator and occurs with one of two silent viewpoint aspect markers solves the following two aspectual puzzles in Saisiyat
- The first puzzle is that, with states and activities, [ila] is ambiguous between an inchoative and a universal perfect reading (5)

5) ataw ‘ayaeh ila
 Ataw sick ILA
 “Ataw has become sick” (inchoative) or “Ataw has been sick” (universal perfect)

- The telic operator required by [ila] derives the inchoative reading when combined with the neutral aspect operator, while with the imperfective operator, it derives the universal perfect reading
 - o Temporal adverbials mark the distance between the reference time and either the LB of the PTS (with the neutral operator) or the initial endpoint of the eventuality (with the imperfective operator) (6)

6) ka 'aehoe' honaehnge ila Sebet-en ni ataw
 KA dog long time ILA beat-PF GEN Ataw
 "Ataw started beating the dog a long time ago" (inchoative) or "Ataw has been beating the dog for a long time" (universal perfect)

- The second puzzle is that accomplishments and achievements do not necessarily give a culminative reading with [ina], but they necessarily do with [ila]
 - o The sentences with [ina] in (7) and (10) can give terminative readings, and thus can be followed by sentences denying culmination ((9) and (12))
 - o The sentences with [ila] in (8) and (11) only give culminative readings, and thus cannot be followed by sentences denying culmination ((9) and (12))

7) ataw ina r-om-ae'oe' ka pinobaeh
 Ataw INA <AV>drink KA wine
 "Ataw drank (some of) the wine"

8) ataw rae'oe' ila ka pinobaeh
 Ataw drink ILA KA wine
 "Ataw drank the wine (and finished it)"

9) okay il-'amet-i:
 NEG eat/drink-finish-PV.DEP
 "[it] is not eaten/drank up"

10) ataw ina '-oem-leb kateSnenan
 Ataw INA <AV>close door
 "Ataw (tried to) close the door"

11) ataw '-oem-leb ila kateSnenan
 Ataw <AV>close ILA door
 "Ataw closed the door (successfully)"

12) 'aehoe' am '-om-aybez
 dog AM <AV>block
 "The dog was blocking the way"

- The requirement of the telic operator by [ila] can account for the necessity of culminative readings in (8) and (11), while the lack of such a requirement by [ina] can account for the availability of the terminative readings in (7) and (10)

4. Crosslinguistic Implications

- The Saisiyat perfect is similar to the perfect in Niuean
 - o The Niuean perfect [kua ... tei] gives inchoative readings with individual-level states, in-progress readings with activities, and completive readings with accomplishments (Matthewson et al 2012)
 - The perfect in both languages gives inchoative readings, though these are possible with more predicates in Saisiyat (stage-level states and activities) than in Niuean
 - The perfect in both languages gives completive readings with accomplishments
 - It is not clear whether telicity in Niuean is encoded by an independent syntactic operator, as in Saisiyat

- The aspectual marker [plan] in St'at'imcets also shows similar behavior (Davis 2006)
 - o [plan] gives inchoative readings with individual-level states, in-progress readings with activities, and completive readings with accomplishments and achievements

Readings	Saisiyat [ila]	Niuean [kua ... tei]	St'at'imcets [plan]
Perfect	Yes	Yes	No
Inchoative	Yes (w/ Atelics)	Yes (w/ Individual-level States)	Yes (w/ Individual-level States)
In-Progress	No	Yes (w/ Activities)	Yes (w/ Activities)
Completive	Yes (w/ Telics)	Yes (w/ Telics)	Yes (w/ Telics)

- Saisiyat goes against the tendency of correlation between aspectual morphology and telicity encoding
 - o Languages with poor aspectual morphology (e.g., English) typically encode telicity through the combination of the verb and its object
 - o Languages with rich aspectual morphology (e.g., Russian) typically encode telicity with independent syntactic heads expressed by morphology
 - o Saisiyat has relatively poor aspectual morphology (it has only a handful of viewpoint aspect markers and no overt situation aspect morphology) but encodes telicity with the silent syntactic head required by [ila]

5. Outstanding Questions

- The next step for this project is to further investigate the construction of telicity in Saisiyat
 - o For instance, since telicity is not encoded in the predicate in Saisiyat, both [Sombet ka 'aehoe'] “beat the dog” and [rae'oe' ka pinobaeh] “drink the wine” are activities (i.e., atelic dynamic events)
 - o However, with the telic operator required by [ila], “beat the dog” becomes an inchoative (13), while “drink the wine” becomes an accomplishment (8)

13) ataw S-om-bet ila ka 'aehoe'
 Ataw <AV>beat ILA KA dog
 “Ataw has started beating the dog”

- What (e.g., lexical semantics, properties of the event or of the object) determines which predicates become inchoatives and which accomplishments with the telic operator?
- The creation predicate [tomaew'aen ka taew'aen] “build the house” seems to be inherently telic
 - This predicate gives a culminative reading with the perfective [ina] (14), so that it cannot be followed by a sentence denying culmination (15)

14) ataw ina t-om-aew'aen ka imaSaso' taew'aen
 Ataw INA <AV>build house KA new house
 “Ataw built a new house (and finished it)”

15) ko'hael am sizaeh
 next year AM finish
 “Next year (he) will finish (it)”

- Are all creation predicates (and only these predicates) inherently telic in Saisiyat? (cf. Singh (1998) for Hindi, Soh and Kuo (2005) for Mandarin)
- Why is telicity encoded by the composition of the verb and the object in these and only these predicates?
- The predicate [‘inaray taew'aen minoSa kakiSka:atan] “go from home to school” is ambiguous between an inchoative and a culminative reading with [ila] (16)

16) ataw ‘inaray taew'aen m-inoSa ila kakiSka:atan ‘aehae' kaSepewan
 Ataw from home AF-go to ILA school one hour
 “Ataw left from home for school an hour ago” or “Ataw arrived at school from home an hour ago”

- What makes this ambiguity available with this predicate (e.g., the two different salient endpoints)?
- Does this ambiguity occur with other predicates?
- How does the structure of the object (quantification, the marker [ka]) interact with telicity?
 - The marker [ka] especially may be expected to interact with telicity, as [ka] seems to be involved with case marking and specificity or definiteness
- Is there a relation between the resulting state reading often given by perfects and the telicity requirement by the perfect [ila] in Saisiyat?
 - In other words, is there any principled way (other than specifying telicity as a requirement of the perfect) of connecting the PTS part of the perfect (relating reference times) to aspectual parts of the perfect (indicating result states)?

6. References

- Chomsky, Noam. 1957. *Syntactic Structures*. Mouton de Gruyter.
- Davis, Henry. 2006. A Teacher's Grammar of Upper St'at'imcets.
- Filip, Hana. 1997. Integrating Telicity, Aspect and NP Semantics: The Role of Thematic Structure. *Formal approaches to Slavic linguistics 3*: 61-96.
- Huang, Xuanfun. 2003. The Tense, Aspect and Reality in Tsou and Saisiyat.
- Iatridou, S., E. Anagnostopoulou and R. Izvorski. 2001. Observations about the Form and Meaning of the Perfect. *Ken Hale: A Life in Language*, ed. M. Kenstowicz: 189-238. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press. Reprinted in *Perfect Explorations*, eds. A. Alexiadou, M Rathert, and A. von Stechow. Mouton de Gruyter.
- Kratzer, Angelika. 2003. Telicity and the Meaning of Objective Case. *The Syntax of Time*, ed. J. Gueron and J. Lecarme. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.
- Matthewson, Lisa, Heidi Quinn, and Lynsey Talagi. 2012. Notes on the Niuean Perfect. In *UCLA Working Papers in Linguistics, Theories of Everything Volume 17, Article 27*: 222-233.
- McCoard, Robert W. 1978. *The English Perfect: Tense Choice and Pragmatic Inferences*. Amsterdam: North-Holland Press.
- Pancheva, Roumyana and Arnim von Stechow. 2004. On the Present Perfect Puzzle. *NELS 34*, eds. K. Moulton and M. Wolf.
- Parsons, Terence. 1990. *Events in the Semantics of English: A Study of Subatomic Semantics*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.
- Singh, Mona. 1998. On the Semantic of the Perfective Aspect. *Natural Language Semantics 6*: 171-199.
- Smith, Carlota. 1991. *The Parameter of Aspect*. Dordrecht: Kluwer.
- Soh, Hooi Ling and Jenny Yi-Chun Kuo. 2005. Perfective Aspect and Accomplishment Situations in Mandarin Chinese. *Perspectives on Aspect*, eds. Angeliek van Hout, Henriette de Swart and Henk Verkuyl: 199-216. Dordrecht: Springer.
- Travis, Lisa. 2000. Event Structure and Syntax. *Events as Grammatical Objects*, ed. J. Pustejovsky and C. Tenny, 145-185. CSLI: Stanford University Press.
- Travis, Lisa. 1992. Inner Aspect and the Structure of VP. *Proceedings from the Second Annual Lexical-Syntactic Relations Workshop*. Cahiers Linguistique de l'UQAM, eds, Mariette Champagne and Sylvie Ratte 1.1: 130-146.
- Yeh, Marie M-L. 2002. A Syntactic and Semantic Study of Saisiyat Verbs. Doctoral Dissertation, National Taiwan Normal University. Taipei.