REVISITING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PROPERTIES OF ATELICITY AND PARTITIVITY

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Abstract: The paper aims at revisiting the relationship between the properties of (a)telicity and partitivity in Romanian. It is a better motivated extension of Crăiniceanu (2009). As before, we distinguish between two possible partitive constructions which are distinct in point of their VP aspectuality: bare partitive constructions (which form atelic VPs) and full partitive constructions (which form telic VPs). Both partitive constructions involve two noun phrases out of which one is phonologically deleted, i.e. they involve a "silent noun phrase" (Sauerland and Yatsushiro 2004). Since bare partitives have no intrinsic existential force (Le Bruyn 2008), their upstairs quantifiers are also deleted and the VPs they form are atelic, i.e. their theme object is not atomic, but rather incrementally homogeneous (Landman and Rothstein 2010). In contrast, the quantifier determiners are preserved in the structure of full partitives as they are intonationally focussed. Full partitive VPs are "once-only verbs" (Le Bruyn 2008) and the focussed quantity serves as "measured" theme object, turning the whole VP into a telic one.

Keywords: telicity, atelicity, incremental homogeneity, measured theme objects, phonologically silent nouns

1. Introduction

The main aim of the paper is that of analysing the induced atelic property on Romanian verb phrases with classes of verbs that may select theme objects preceded by partitive prepositions such as: *din* 'from', *la* 'at', *prin* 'through, across'. We assume that in both Romance and Germanic languages telicity and atelicity are aspectual properties that are compositionally computed at the level of VP/IP (Krifka 1992, Filip 2008, Rothstein 2008). The data are the same as in Crăiniceanu (2009) and, for convenience, we take over the section that lists the classes of Romanian verbs that may occur with partitive noun phrases in atelic predications and the section that revises the means of achieving atelicity in Romanian.

2. Classes of Romanian verbs that may occur with partitive noun phrases in atelic predications

In Romanian, with the exception of state, achievement and semelfactive verbs, all classes of verbs that describe events which involve a change in degree of a gradable property of their object occur with partitive noun phrases.

This is different from French and other languages where only fragmentative verbs such as *lua* 'take', *mânca* 'eat', *bea* 'drink' can appear with partitive noun phrases. The classes of Romanian verbs that occur with what we shall call bare partitives yielding atelic VPs are listed below:

(i) strictly incremental verbs: *mânca* 'eat', *construi* 'build', *compune* 'compose';

(ii) incremental verbs: *citi* 'read', *spăla* 'wash', *mătura* 'sweep', *bea* 'drink', *lua* 'take', *examina* 'examine';

(iii) scalar verbs as a whole class: *topi* 'melt', *goli* 'empty', *seca* 'dry', as illustrated in (1a-d):

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(1) a. Au demolat din clădiri în acest cartier ani la rând
Have demolish-PERF from buildings in this district years at row
'They demolished part of the buildings in this district years on end.'
b. Am citit Soniei din "Prinţ şi Cerşetor" două ore
have read-PERF Sonia-DAT from "Prince and Pauper" two hours
'I read of "Prince and Pauper" to Sonia for two hours.'
c. A secat din lac în lunile de vară
Has dry-PERF from lake in months-the of summer
'The lake dried partially during the months of summer.'
d. Maria a băut din cafea câteva minute
Mary has drink-PERF from coffee several minutes
'Mary drank of the coffee for a couple of minutes.'

The (apparent) absence of the definite article in front of partitve noun phrases in Romanian is analysed and explained in section 5 below.

3. Means of achieving atelicity in Romanian

In Romanian and other Romance languages, atelicity is achieved by three means. The first means is by the application of the imperfective aspectual operator, as in (2a and b), i.e. of grammatical aspect, signalled by specific tense morphology on the verb in the *Prezent* or the *Imperfect* tenses:

(2) a. Mănânc un măr (atelic predication)
eat-PRES an apple
'I'm eating an apple.'
b. Mâncam un măr (atelic predication)
eat-IMPERF an apple
'I was eating and apple.'

The imperfective viewpoint operator is used to focus on some internal parts of the eventuality and yields *partial* states, processes or events (Filip 2000, Caudal 2006).

The second means of achieving atelicity is the presence of a mass noun or bare plural direct object of eventive verbs in the *Imperfect* tense or the *Perfect Compus* tense, as in (3a and b):

(3) a. Maria mânca mere / pâine de o oră când...
Maria eat-IMPERF apples bread from an hour when
'Mary had been eating apples / bread for an hour when…'
b. Maria a mâncat mere / pâine o oră.
Maria has eat-PERF apples bread an hour
'Mary ate apples / bread for an hour.'

The occurrence of *for*-phrases with a homogeneous eventuality α is taken as diagnostic test for verifying atelicity; *α for an hour* is defined as in (4) following Landman and Rothstein (2010):

(4) α for an hour = λe. α(e) & LENGTH(τ(e)) = <1, HOUR>

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As far as the third means of obtaining atelicity is concerned, we contend that it is achieved in structures that contain a partitive preposition preceding either a count noun in the singular/in the plural or a mass noun (i.e. bare partitives) in co-occurrence with a verb in the *Imperfect* or the *Perfect Compus*. In this paper we focus on the atelicity of predications in the *Perfect Compus* with partitive noun phrases, as illustrated in (1a-d) above as well as in (5a-d) below:

(5) a. Am lucrat la casă două veri
have work-PERF at house two summers
'I worked on building parts of the house for two summers.'
b. Am ales din cărți toată după amiaza
have choose-PERF from books all after noon
'I spent the whole afternoon choosing of the books.'
c. Am mâncat din brâză două zile
have eat-PERF from cheese two days
'I ate of the cheese for two days.'
d. Am măturat prin curte două ore. (*prin curte* is a measured path)
have sweep-PERF across courtyard two hours
'I kept sweeping across parts of the courtyard for two hours.'

We interpret the partitivity property of Romanian nominals in (1a-d) and (5a-d) as a linguistic means of inducing atelicity at the level of the whole VP.

4. The aspectual contrast between two possible partitive constructions in Romanian

In the rest of the paper we show that VPs with bare partitives, illustrated above in (1a-d) and (5a-d), enter the construction of atelic predications while another possible partitive construction , i.e. the full partitive construction (minimally different from the former) enters the construction of telic VPs. The distinct behaviour in terms of aspectuality between bare partitive VPs and full partitive VPs is illustrated below:

(6) a. Bare partitive (atelic) VP
Am mâncat din brânză o săptămână
have eat-PERF from cheese a week
'I ate of the cheese for a week.'
b. Full partitive (telic) VP
Am mâncat mult/puțin din brânză o săptămână
have eat-PERF a lot a little from cheese a week
'I ate mucht/little of the cheese in a week.'

(7) a. Bare partitive (atelic) VP
Au demolat din clădiri în acest cartier ani la rând
have demolish-PERF from buildings in this district years at row
'They demolished part of the buildings in this district years on end.'
b. Full partitive (telic) VP
Au demolat mult/puțin din clădiri în acest cartier într-un an
have demolish-PERF a lot a little from buildings in this district in a year
'They demolished many/few of the buildings in this district in a year.'

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Following Landman and Rothstein (2010), we shall explain the atelicity property of Romanian bare partitive VPs in terms of the property of incremental homogeneity enjoyed by activity VPs (see section 7 below). The telicity property of Romanian full partitive VPs is accounted for in terms of accomplishment verbs' co-occurrence with "measured" theme objects (Rothstein 2008, Landman and Rothstein 2010).

5. Remarks on the semantics of partitivity

Linguists have distinguished between two main types of partitive constructions: the full partitive construction (an expression of the form det_1 + (N) + *of* + det_2 + common noun, illustrated in (8), and the bare partitive construction, an expression of the form *of* + det_2 + common noun, illustrated in (9):

(8) I sold two of my books.
(9) Again Tarzan came down the village and renewed his supply of arrows and ate of the offering of food which the blacks had made to appease his wrath.

It has long been noticed that the embedded DPs in both partitive constructions are subject to several constraints.

First, as illustrated in (8) and (9), the DPs in a partitive complement position should be definite (i.e. they are determined by *the*, a demonstrative or a possessive). This is the *Partitive Constraint* property enjoyed by partitive noun phrases (Selkirk 1977, Jackendoff 1977, Barwise and Cooper 1981; but see counterexamples to the Partitive Constraint in Abbott 1996).

As made conspicuous in the glosses of the Romanian examples above (see 1a-d, 5a-d, 6a and b, and 7a and b) the definite article does not morphologically surface in noun phrases that occur in a partitive complement position. Romanian, which is different from other Romance languages such as French, has a suffixal definite article (*măr(u)**l*** vs. ***la** pomme*) and lacks prenominal "partitive articles". Moreover, in Romanian, the presence of the suffixal definite article is blocked from surfacing when the noun is preceded by prepositions (with the exception of *cu* 'with'): e.g. *Mă îndrept către parc/*către parcu**l*** 'I am heading towards the park' The drop of the suffixal definite article when preceded by a preposition has been explained in terms of a special type of incorporation of D^0 (*-l*) into P^0 (preposition) in a particular syntactic configuration (Mardale 2006).

We argue that the complement of the preposition in Romanian partitive constructions is however a DP not a NP, a property proved by the occurrence of the noun complement with demonstrative determiners and with the definite article whenever the noun is followed by a modifier (Nedelcu 2009):

(10) a. Am mâncat din această prăjitură/din aceşti biscuiţi
have eat-PERF from this cake from these biscuits
'I ate of this cake/of these biscuits.'
(11) b. Am băut din vinul de pe masă/din vinul lui Ion
have drink-PERF from wine-the de pe table from wine Ion's
'I drank of the wine on the table/of Ion's wine.'

We conclude that DP complements of prepositions in Romanian partitive constructions do comply with the Partitive Constraint.

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In keeping with the meaning of the partitive construction (it is about parts of some greater whole with the preposition *of* denoting the part relation), the other constraint imposed on the embedded DP in partitive constructions is that it must semantically denote a group level entity – a singleton containing non-empty non-singletons (cf. Ladusaw 1982, Link 1983).

As known, along plural nouns, mass nouns and singular count nouns can occur as complements in the full partitive construction yielding *mass partitives*, as in (12) and (13) below:

(12) He stole most of the gold.
(13) Most of the book is interesting.

The mass partitive constructions in (12) and (13) obey the Partitive Constraint and they should be understood in light of Link's (1983) proposal, according to which there is a function μ that yields for any individual the stuff of which it consists (for instance, *the book* may be viewed as its content and *the gold* as portions of matter).

Thus, in partitive constructions, the denotation of the complement DP has to be construable as a set that has proper parts: atomic individual parts in the count interpretation or proper mass-parts in the mass-partitive interpretation. The main (upstairs) determiner of the partitive noun phrase takes these proper parts as its domain (cf. Roberts 2005).

Bare partitive constructions as in the example (9), offered by Hoeksema (1996), are a rather rare construction in English where the number of verbs that allow the full partitive/bare partitive alternation is limited apparently only to verbs of bodily ingestion: the regular DP in (9) is replaced by an of-DP to indicate that "the object does not wholly but only partly undergo the action of the verb…. For instance, while Tarzan may eat of the offering, he cannot be said to "read of the newspaper", if all he did was look at part of it" (Hoeksema 1996: 15). This is precisely what can be said in Romanian (*Am citit din ziar* 'I read from the newspaper') and as seen in section 2 a host of classes of Romanian verbs do admit the alternation. It seems that Romanian verbs are quite sensitive to the property of proper partitivity and easily allow bare partitives in atelic VPs.

6. Towards an analysis of VP aspectual properties in Romanian partitive constructions

We argue that the two Romanian partitive constructions (the bare partitive construction and the full partitive construction) are unambiguously distinct constructions in point of their VP aspectuality. We provide evidence that the bare partitive noun phrase enters the construction of an atelic VP compatible only with *for*-phrases while the full partitive noun phrase forms a telic VP, compatible only with *in*-phrases:

(14) a. Bare partitive (atelic) VP
Am mâncat din (această bucată de) brânză o săptămână
have eat-PERF from this piece of cheese a week
'I ate of the cheese for a week.'

b. Full partitive (telic) VP:
Am mâncat mult/puțin din (această bucată de) brânză într-o săptămână.
have eat-PERF a lot a little from this piece of cheese in a week
'I ate much/little of the cheese in a week.'

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(15) a. Bare partitive (atelic) VP
Au demolat din (aceste) clădiri în acest cartier ani la rand
have demolish-PERF from these buildings in this district years at row
'They demolished part of the buildings in this district years on end.'
b. Full partitive (telic) VP
Au demolat mult/puțin din (aceste) clădiri în acest cartier într- un an.
have demolish-PERF a lot a little from these buildings in this district in a year
'They demolished many/few of the buildings in this district in a year.'

This is unexpected since both partitive expressions refer to some part/parts in the denotation of the definite DP.

To explain the difference in interpretation between bare partitives, in (14a) and (15a), and full partitives, in (14b) and (15b), which has repercussions on the aspectual semantics of the whole respective VP, we make the following assumptions (see Jackendoff 1977, Sauerland and Yatsushiro 2004). Partitive constructions always involve two noun phrases out of which one is phonologically deleted (i.e. it is a "silent noun phrase", in the sense of Sauerland and Yatsushiro 2004):

(16) a. most ~~parts~~ of the book
b. most ~~books~~ of the books

Semantically, the deleted noun provides a way of dividing into countable units the plurality of the complement DP (i.e. *the book*, *the books*) and *most* quantifies over the proper parts designated by the deleted nouns. The phonologically silent noun can also be a mass noun with a bland meaning like *stuff* or *content* (whose deletion does not require an antecedent). The silent mass noun may occur with either a singular definite DP or with a plural definite DP complement:

(17) a. most ~~content~~ of this paper
b. most ~~content~~ of these papers

The expressions in (17) are *mass partitives* where the individual (i.e. *this paper*, *these papers*) is mapped onto the stuff that makes up that individual (see Link 1983, Sauerland and Yatsushiro 2004).

Adopting Sauerland and Yatsushiro's (2004) analysis of partitive constructions, we interpret the Romanian bare partitives in (14a) and (15a) as mass partitives that have the following structures:

(18) Am mâncat) ~~multă/puțină materie brânză~~ din (această bucată de) brânză o
have eat-PERF a lot a little stuff cheese from this piece of cheese a
săptămână.
week
'I ate of the cheese for a week.'

(19) (Au demolat) ~~multe/puține clădiri~~ din (aceste) clădiri în acest cartier
have demolish-PERF ~~many few buildings~~ of these buildings in this district
ani la rand.
years at row
'They demolished of these buildings in this district years on end.'

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It has been shown that bare partitives have two important properties: (i) they express proper partitivity, and (ii) they do not have intrinsic existential force (Le Bruyn 2008). We contend that it is property (ii) that engenders the phonological deletion of the nouns cheese-stuff/buildings together with their upstairs quantifiers, which are neutral with respect to quantity.

We explain the structure of the other bare partitives exemplified in sections 2 and 3 in the same fashion. Consider the following examples:

(20) a. A secat din lac în lunile de vară.
(S- a evaporat) ~~multă/puțină apă~~ din (acest) lac în lunile
CL3rd SG has evapora-PERF ~~much/little water~~ of this) lake in months-the
de vară.
of summer
'The lake dried partially during the months of summer.'

(21) a. Am lucrat la casă două veri
(Am construit) ~~multe/puține părți de casă~~ din (acestă) casă două veri
have build-PERF ~~many/few building-parts~~ of this house two summers
'I worked on building parts of the house for two summers.'

The partitive preposition *la* 'at' is distinct from another preposition *la* 'at' which does not single out partitivity. Used in slightly substandard or familiar Romanian the latter introduces a quantity argument that bears an evaluative interpretation and is intonationally stressed:

(22) a. Am mâncat la mere!
have eat-PERF at apples
'I ate very many apples!'
b. A venit la lume!
has come-PERF at people
'There came very many people!'

The sentences in (22) are interpreted as telic predications.

In bare partitives, we interpret the expressions *din* 'from' + demonstrative/definite DPs in (18a)-(21a) as designating (sub)kinds, which are kinds to which a contextual restriction has been added (Le Bruyn, 2008). This is in line with Landman and Rothstein's (2010) detection of two possible interpretations of the event type predicate *eat* in predications such as *John ate apples/cheese for an hour* 'Ion a mâncat mere/brânză timp de o oră': the predicate describes either a gnomic eating event or episodic eating events. Adapting these analyses to the Romanian data in (18a) and (19a), for instance, we contend that the predicates *mânca* 'eat' and *demola* 'demolish' enter two possible constructions with distinct interpretations. On the one hand, the predicates *mânca* 'eat' and *demola* 'demolish' are interpreted as *gnomic-eat/-demolish* kind K. For example, in the structures *Am mâncat brânză* 'I ate cheese', *Au demolat clădiri* 'they demolished buildings' there is a gnomic eating/demolishing event with kind as theme (in the sense of Carlson 1977) with no individual instances of the kind theme. On the other hand, the predicates *mânca* 'eat' and *demola* 'demolish' can be interpreted as episodic-*eat/-demolish kind K*. For example, in the structures *Am mâncat din brânză* 'I ate of the cheese' and *Au demolat din clădiri* 'They demolished part of the buildings' there is an episodic eating/demolishing event with kind as theme.

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VPs with bare partitives in (18a) and (19a) denote indefinitely many or few episodic cheese-eatings/building-demolitions spread over the interval designated by a week/years on end. They are atelic VPs fully compatible with *for*-phrases. Hence, episodic predicates that co-occur with bare plurals/mass nouns and bare partitives (at least in Romanian) plus *for*-phrases form atelic, incrementally homogeneous predications (see section 7).

In contrast, we argue that the full partitive VP counterparts to the bare partitive VPs analyzed above form telic VPs, with the same verbs in the same *Perfect Compus* tense, compatible only with *in*-phrases:

(23) a. Am mâncat mult/puțin din (această bucată de) brânză într-o săptămână.
have eat-PERF a lot a little from this piece of cheese in a week
'I ate much/little of the cheese in a week.'

(24) a. Au demolat mult/puțin din (aceste) clădiri în acest cartier.
have demolish-PERF a lot a little from these buildings in this district
într-un an
in a year
'They demolished many/few of these buildings in a year.'

In keeping with Sauerland and Yatsushiro's (2004) analysis of partitive constructions, we contend that Romanian full partitives in (23a) and (24a) have the following structures:

(25) a. (Am mâncat) multe/puține ~~părți de brânză~~ din (această bucată de) brânză
have eat-PERF many few ~~portion of cheese~~ of this piece of cheese
într-o săptămână.
'I ate much/little of the cheese in a week.'

(26) a. (Au demolat) multe/puține ~~clădiri~~ din (aceste) clădiri într-un an.
have demolish-PERF many few ~~buildings~~ of these buildings in a year
'They demolished many/few of these buildings in a year'

Just like bare partitives, the full partitives in (25) and (26) express proper partitivity but this time, we hypothesize that the quantifier determiners (*multe* 'many'/*puține* 'few') are preserved in the structure because they express *focussed/*relevant portions of the unique (maximal) individual designated by the complement DP. The existential force of these quantifiers is still weak as they do not designate a specific quantity but the little/much quantity is intonationally focussed on and becomes relevant in the discourse context.

It should be noticed that the quantifier determiners *multe*/*puține (părți de brânză*/ 'many/few cheese-portions' and *multe*/*puține clădiri* 'many/few buildings' in (25) and (26) turn into quantifier adverbs/degree adverbs, i.e. $mult_{ADV}$ 'a lot', $puțin_{ADV}$ 'little', since when they modify a verb they also bear on an implicit quantity argument thus rendering the predication telic:

(27) a. Am mers $mult_{ADV}$/$puțin_{ADV}$ în două ore.
have walk-PERF a lot a little in two hours
'I walked a lot/little in two hours.'

b. Am mers o distanță lungă$_{ADJ}$/scurtă$_{ADJ}$ în două ore
I walked a long/short distance in two hours

(28) Am mâncat $mult_{ADV}$/$puțin_{ADV}$ (din brânză) într-o săptămână.
have eat-PERF a lot a little of cheese in a week
'I ate much/little of the cheese in a week.'

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(29) Au demolat *mult*$_{ADV}$/*puțin*$_{ADV}$ (din clădiri) într-un an.
have demolish-PERF a lot a little of buildings in a year
'They demolished many/few of the buildings in a year.'

We contend that all the classes of Romanian verbs that occur in full partitive VPs are what Le Bruyn (2008) calls "once-only verbs" (Le Bruyn analyses verbs of this type as "once-only verbs" in Dutch bare partitive constructions). In this context, the verbs are characterized as entailing that the subject can perform the verb-action on the object only once. Since it is only once that the subject eats much or little cheese in a given period of time the relevant quantity becomes focussed and the whole predication turns telic and fails to be incrementally homogeneous (see section 7).

Hence, full partitive telic VPs are entirely distinct from bare partitive VPs, which designate atelic indefinitely many or few episodic events spread over a homogeneous interval of time.

We conclude that Romanian verbs that enter partitive constructions are remarkably sensitive to the relation of proper partitivity (i.e. parts of a definite DP): one way or another, both full partitive constructions and bare partitive constructions express proper partitivity but in terms of aspectuality they are distinct constructions – the former yield telic VPs while the latter yield atelic VPs.

7. Explaining the atelic vs. telic contrast in Romanian partitive constructions

In Rothstein's (2008) account of how telicity/atelicity is encoded, verbs denote sets of measured atoms, M-ATOMS, which are elements in the denotation of the verb that count as 1 by some explicit criterion of measurement (U). The aspectual classes of verbs (states, activities and events) are sensitive as to whether or not the content of the unit of measurement U is grammatically specified. Rothstein offers a semantic basis for distinguishing between telic/atelic predicates: predicates for which a unit of measurement is provided by the linguistic context are telic while predicates for which such a value of measurement cannot be constructed are atelic.

Since Romanian bare partitive noun phrases are interpreted as mass partitives it follows that the VPs thus formed are atelic/homogeneous VPs. Hence, whenever the theme object is not atomic (i.e. it is a mass noun, a bare plural or a mass partitive), as in (30) and (31) below, one cannot determine a measure for what counts as one atomic event and such VPs can only be modified by homogeneous *for*-phrases:

(30) a. Ion a mâncat pâine/ din pâine o oră/*într-o oră
Ion has eat-PERF bread from bread an hour in an hour
'John ate bread/of the bread for an hour/*in an hour.'

(31) a. Ion a mâncat mere / din mere o oră/*într-o oră
Ion has eat-PERF apples from apples an hour in an hour
'Ion ate apples/of the apples for an hour/*in an hour.'

The predications in (30) and (31) enjoy what Landman and Rothstein (2010) call the property of incremental homogeneity.

In a more sophisticated fashion, the incremental homogeneity property captures the long-standing intuition that homogeneous verb phrases are true at stages (subintervals) which

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hold over a time-span interval (Dowty 1979). The property of containing or not containing qualitatively different stages distinguishes between homogeneous/atelic VPs and non-homogeneous/telic VPs. More accurately, incremental homogeneity is "incremental preservation of cross-temporal identity of an event and of its event type, between the running time of the initial subinterval (the onset) of that event and the running time of the event itself" (Landman and Rothstein 2010: 236). Two events or sub-events e_1 and e_2 are cross-temporally identical iff e_1 and e_2 count as one and the same event at different times, i.e. e_1 is just an earlier version of e_2. An essential property of incrementally homogeneous situations is that they allow gaps/pause stages which should be of a size that does not obscure the identity of the event in question.

We claim that the event types in (30-31) which involve the episodic predicate *eat*, a mass noun/a bare plural/a mass partitive and a *for*-phrase are incrementally homogeneous. By incremental homogeneity, there are kind-eating events (cross-temporally identical to *e*) incrementally relating John to the $\text{kind}_{\text{APPLE}}$/$\text{kind}_{\text{BREAD}}$ within the running time of the same event of apple/bread eating. For an hour, each such kind eating event at an incremental sub-event must be witnessed by eating specific apples or bread and natural gaps in the event do not cancel the event identity (Landman and Rothstein 2010).

On Krifka's (1998) approach (i.e. the *Rule of Aspectual Composition*) the predications in (30-31) also come out as atelic/cumulative predications as the cumulative status of the VP is determined by the cumulative status of the theme argument. However, Krifka's basis of the contrast between telic/quantized and atelic/cumulative VPs cannot explain the aspectuality of Romanian full partitive VPs where the theme objects are cumulative but the overall aspectual value at the VP level is telic/quantized, compatible only with *in*-phrases:

(32) a. Am citit Soniei mult/puțin din "Prinț și Cerșetor" într-o oră
have read-PERF Sonia-DAT a lot/little from "Prince and Pauper" in an hour
'I read much/little of "Prince and Pauper" to Sonia in an hour.'

We interpret Romanian quantifier adverbs *mult* 'a lot' and *puțin* 'little' as analogous to twig, sequence or quantity measure phrases (Zucchi and White 2001) and they all yield telic VPs. English measure phrases such as *a bit, a part of, a drop of* have Romanian counterparts like *un strop din* 'a drop of', *un sfert din* 'a quarter of', *un vârf de cuțit din* 'a tip of knife of', and they enter the composition of telic VPs:

(33) a. John drank a quantity of milk in 20 minutes.
b. Am scris un sfert din teză în două luni.
have write-PERF a quarter from dissertation in two months
'I wrote a quarter of the dissertation in two months.'

To explain the telicity property of the VPs above we follow Rothstein (2008) who ceases characterizing telicity in terms of quantization and argues for defining telicity of predicates in terms of their occurrence with a "measured" theme object. The expression of quantity rendered by the theme object need not be a precise measure as long as a criterion of individuation or atomic measure can be determined in the linguistic context. Remember that we interpret verbs with full partitives as "once-only verbs" and the quantity designated by the quantifier is intonationally focussed. On this analysis, full partitive VPs cannot partake of the incremental homogeneity property: the onset of these events is not of the same type as the

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events themselves. Moreover, the event type of these predications is not preserved along growing initial sub-intervals and their stages are not qualitatively identical over the time-span interval.

8. Conclusion

We have proved that Romanian classes of verbs that take prepositional noun phrases as theme objects enter two distinct constructions in point of aspectuality. When they occur with mass nouns, bare plurals and mass partitives they yield atelic VPs, compatible with homogeneous *for*-phrases. In contrast, when they occur in full partitive constructions the result VPs are telic and compatible only with *in*-phrases. The atelicity of the former VPs has been explained in terms of the property of incremental homogeneity while the telicity of the latter VPs has been accounted for in terms of accomplishment verbs' co-occurrence with "measured" theme objects.

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