

Are activities always (im)perfective? Assessing the Morphology-Sensitive Model in child Romanian

Ioana Stoicescu

Abstract: This paper is concerned with the acquisition of activities in child Romanian. It investigates the hypothesis put forth by Bertinetto *et al.* (2015) that there is no universal route for the development of tense and grammatical aspect, which is not essentially influenced by situational aspect categories (e.g., state, activity, (a)telic, etc.). Bertinetto and collab. proposed a Morphology-Sensitive Model, according to which the specific morphological properties of the target language, not aspectual semantic categories are used as a source of information by children. Given this model, the prediction is that, in Romanian, where situation type aspect is a covert category, situational aspect features do not guide the production of tense-grammatical aspect morphology in child language; thus, there will be considerable mismatching between situation type aspect classes and the morphology produced in child speech. This prediction was investigated using child Romanian data coming from the longitudinal corpus of one child and was disconfirmed by the data. Activity predicates were more likely to be found in imperfective rather than perfective contexts, proving children's early sensitivity to both situation type aspect and grammatical aspect.

Key words: language acquisition, situation type aspect, activities, morphology-sensitive model, grammatical aspect.