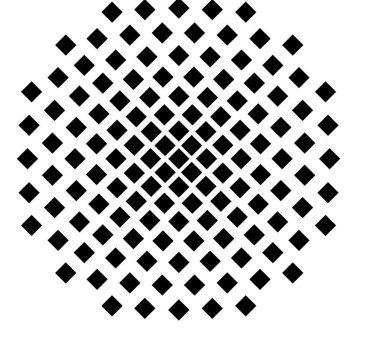




# Severing away the incremental theme



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## Incremental Theme Verbs

(1) She ate the sandwich.

- The *sandwich* is an incremental theme: it is used up incrementally ‘bit by bit’ as the event denoted by the VP progresses

Is the incrementality located in the direct object? No.

(2) She ate at the sandwich.

- Conative: there is incremental consumption in (2), although the conative argument is no direct object (Beavers, 2013)

Is the incrementality located in the verb? No.

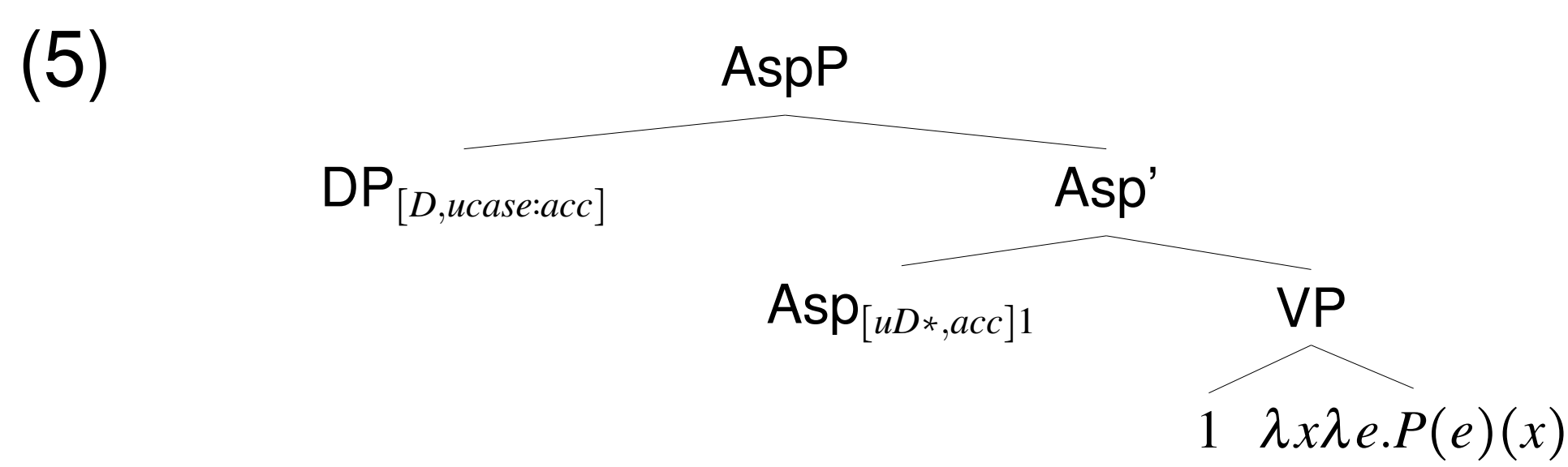
(3) She ate.

- Object drop: incremental theme verbs pattern with activity verbs and activities are not incremental. (Rappaport Hovav, 2008)

The incrementality is located in the semantics of objective case

(4) Sie fraß den Apfel.  
She ate the.ACC apple.

- Correlation of objective (accusative) case and event culmination in German (4), Finnish (Kiparsky, 1998), Scottish Gaelic (Ramchand, 1997)
- Kratzer (2004): Germanic accomplishments are built in the syntax by extending an activity VP denotation with an Asp(ectual)P that determines event culmination.



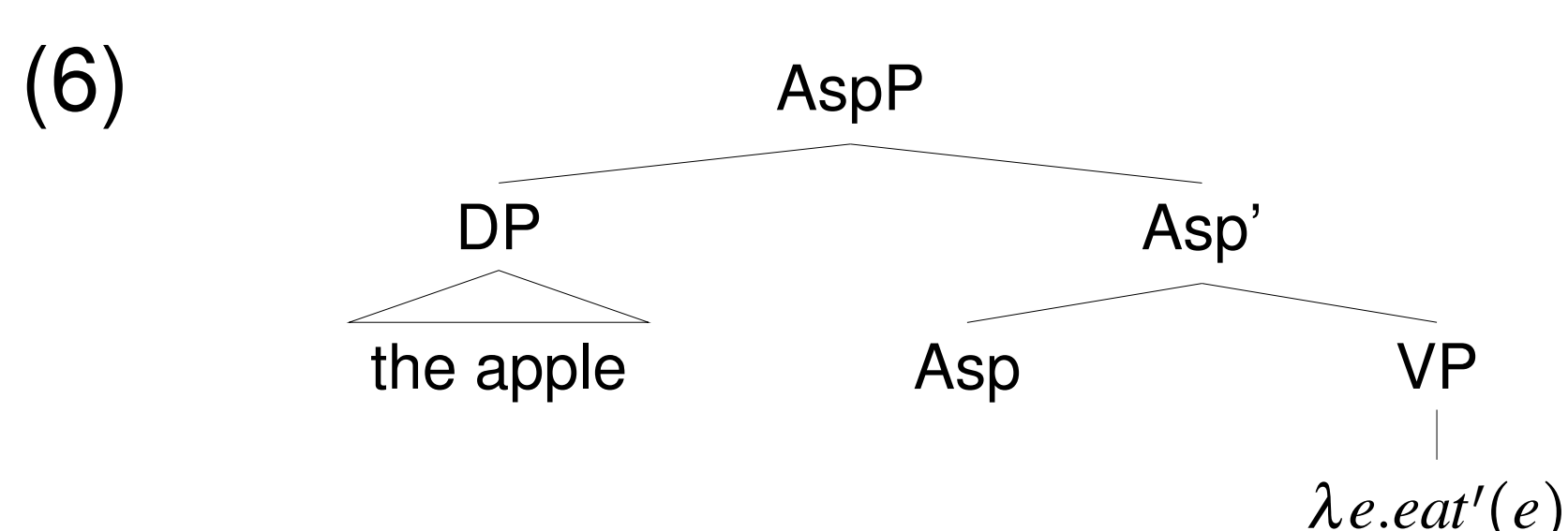
- Asp bears an interpretable accusative case feature which attracts uninterpretable accusative case on the direct object
- To check accusative case, the direct object moves from its base position to the specifier of Asp, leaving an index trace (and agreement features) bound by the case feature on Asp.
- The semantics of Kratzer’s Asp head determines event culmination: all subparts of the theme are affected by the event.
- *measure* is a function which maps the theme to its upper-bounded part structure (Moltmann (1996); Schwarzschild (2002)).

$$\text{Asp}_{[acc]} \rightarrow \lambda R \lambda x \lambda e . R(x)(e) \wedge \exists f . \text{measure}(f) \wedge \forall x' . x' \leq f(x) \rightarrow (\exists e' . e' \leq e \wedge R(x')(e'))$$

- Idea: let different flavours of Asp account for (2) and (3).

## Severing away the incremental theme

- Patterning of incremental theme verbs with activities (3): sever away the internal argument from the VP and let Asp introduce the incremental theme via event identification with the VP denotation (as in Kennedy (2012)).



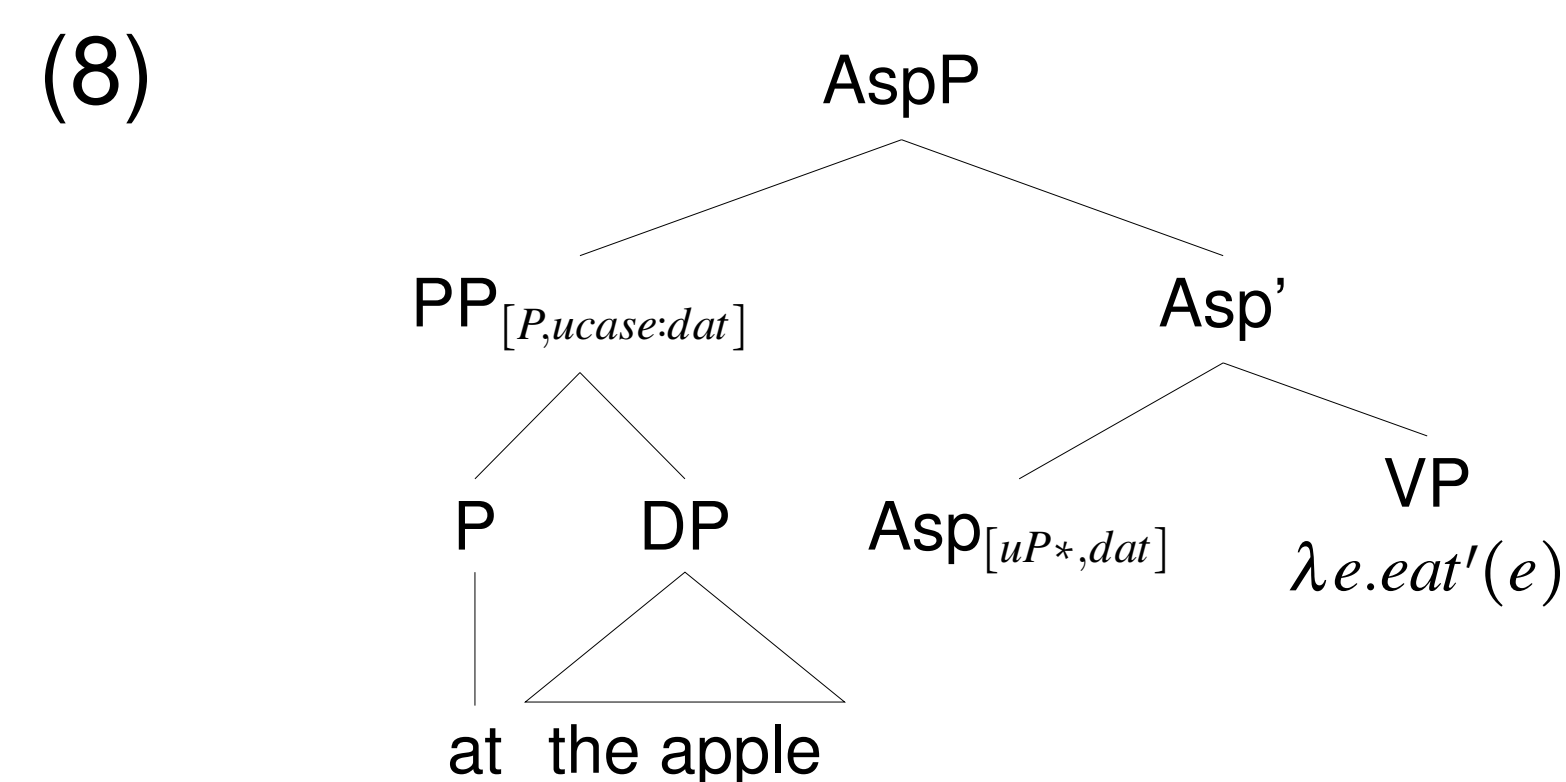
- *all* subparts of the apple are affected by the eating activity.

$$\text{Asp}_{[acc]} \rightarrow \lambda x \lambda e \exists f . \text{measure}(f) \wedge \forall x' . x' \leq f(x) \rightarrow (\exists e' . e' \leq e \wedge \text{affect}(e')(x'))$$

## Conatives of consumption activities: theme measures out event

(7) Sie fraß an dem Apfel.  
She ate at the.DAT apple

- Incrementality in the conative (2): extend case checking mechanism to dative case on conative arguments.
- Uninterpretable dative case is checked by an interpretable dative case feature on Asp as in (8).



- *some* (SI: but not all) subparts of the apple are affected by the eating activity.

$$\text{Asp}_{[dar]} \rightarrow \lambda x \lambda e . \exists f . \text{measure}(f) \wedge \exists x' . x' \leq f(x) \rightarrow (\exists e' . e' \leq e \wedge \text{affect}(e')(x'))$$

## Conatives of creation accomplishments: event measures out theme

(9) Peter baut \*(an einem Haus).  
Peter build at a.DAT house.

- No object drop, thus *to build a house* is not an activity
- Temporal but not physical opacity of existence entailments: (9)
  - there is a house / → there is a half house (physical extent) / → there is a half-built house (temporal extent)
- The progress of the event described measures out the theme
- The accomplishment VP describes a whole-part structure of an event with an upper bound, a *plan* or *script* specifying the subevents that lead to the realization of a goal (Hierarchical Bias Hypothesis (Zacks and Iyer, 2001))
- *some* (SI: but not every) subevent of the plan for building a house has been executed.

$$\text{Asp}_{[dar]} \rightarrow \lambda R \lambda x \lambda e \exists f . \text{measure}(f) \wedge e' \leq R(f)(x)$$

## Conatives of creation activities

(10) Sie schrieb (an einem Brief).  
She wrote at a.DAT letter.

- The verb meaning does not depend on the direct object (object drop), thus *to write* is an activity and a writing event is entailed.
- But the theme is measured out in terms of the progress of the event: when a theme is present, *write* can be understood as both an activity and an accomplishment.
- There is a writing event which realizes *some* (SI: but not every) subevent of the plan for writing a letter.

$$\text{Asp}_{[dar]} \rightarrow \lambda R \lambda x \lambda e \exists f . \text{measure}(f) \wedge R(e) \wedge e \leq R(f)(x)$$

## Germanic Particles & Progressives

- Overt Asp: *eat up*: telic + accusative + all parts affected
- Overt Asp: *anfressen* (up.PRTC.eat): telic + accusative + not all parts affected (vs. conative *eat at*: atelic + dative + some parts affected)
- Entailments of progressives pattern with conatives; like conatives progressives are licit only with accomplishments and activities, progressives developed out of a construction with *at* (*He was a-tellin' the truth*) (Alexiadou, 2013).