**Semantic Competition in Aspectual Realization**

The goal of this paper is to behaviourally test whether English aspect is realized via semantic competition using a working memory paradigm. Specifically, Hayes et al. (1999) among others, argue the completedness (telicity) and uncompletedness (atelicity) of events is understood through a scalar semantic derivation. Essentially this process arises from a mapping between the verb and theme, creating a scalar set comprised of possible event stages. Furthermore, Filip (2008) argues a grammatical operator is responsible for selecting the unique maximal event stage by comparing all event stages against each other. Therefore, since numerous candidates are being compared against one another this process can be seen as competition. If it is the case that this type of complex processing exists in the derivation, we expect it to have a behavioural correlate. A known method sensitive to testing for competition is the sentence-span task (Daneman & Carpenter, 1980). This task burdens working memory with additional information, forcing the system to exceed threshold. As the demand for retaining memory words strains cognitive resources, aspectual constructions requiring more comparisons will be harder to process. Thus, if scalar sets for telic events include more event stages than atelic ones, they are cognitively more costly. It is predicted that trials with these events will have lower word recall, as the system will not be able to meet the demands of both processes (word retention and sentence processing). To conclude, this paper reflects how one can further validate theoretical accounts by testing them using behavioural methodology.

**References**

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