

### INSTANT ACTIONS IN MODERN ENGLISH: ACHIEVEMENTS VS SEMELFACTIVES

The article focuses on two aspectual classes of predicates: achievements and semelfactives. The approaches to their differentiation are quite controversial. In the history of linguistics semelfactives were treated either as a subclass of achievements or activities. The article argues that they constitute an independent aspectual class. The examples from the British national corpus illustrate and ground the observations made in the course of the analysis.

Semelfactives and achievements are defined as telic, stageless events. The telicity of the achievement class lies in their ability to denote an event of change whereas the telicity of semelfactives is explained by their natural atomicity. Since the semelfactive verbs do not denote a change they can be summed into one singular iterative event (S-summing operation). The stages of this event are lexically accessible. This fact differentiates them from the class of activities.

A semelfactive verb may denote both an action of single occurrence and a multiplicative action. Light verb constructions, due to the presence of a pronominal modifier, eliminate this ambiguity.

An instant action can be expressed by accomplishments and even states depending on the context. The default aspectual class of a predicate changes under the influence of context: an aspectual coercion takes place.

**Key words:** aspectuality, telicity, iteration, semelfactive, achievement, accomplishment, activity, state.

Aspectuality field in English has always been a controversial question in linguistics. Z. Vendler's four-way aspectual classification of verbs gave rise to numerous discussions as to the appropriateness of identifying aspect on the verb level. One and the same verb in Z. Vendler's classification may belong to two different aspectual classes depending on the object it takes (e. g. the verb **run** is classified as an activity verb whereas the predicate **run a mile** is an accomplishment [12]. Z. Vendler distinguishes achievements, accomplishments, activities and states as four aspectual classes. Achievements and accomplishments are both telic events [+telic], though they differ in duration: achievements denote instant actions [-durative] while accomplishments are durative [+durative]. Activities as well as states are atelic [-telic] but contrary to states express dynamic actions [+dynamic]. States are marked as non-dynamic [-dynamic]. In Z. Vendler's classification, which is considered to be fundamental in the field, we do not find any difference between such verbs as **reach**, **arrive** on the one hand and **blink**, **flap** on the other.

*When she **reached** the plateau she remained standing, watching for Joss Barnet, waiting for the moment when she would see him riding towards her (BNC C90 1143).*

*She **blinked**, then laughed as she said, 'You must be a reader of thoughts, sir (BNC AT7 954).*

All of them denote instant telic actions, thus can be classified as achievements. However, the latter apart from instant meaning may have an iterative interpretation. It poses a question as to how far identical in the aspectual terms they are. The answer to it comes from a detailed comparative analysis of the both types.

The first who drew attention to the difference between achievements and such instant events as **blink**, **wink**, **cough** was B. Comrie [4]. He defines them as punctual events or semelfactives which denote "a situation that takes place (or has taken) once and only once (a single cough)" [1, 42]. Semelfactives as a separate aspectual class appear also in the classification of M. Moense and M. Steedman. The scholars distinguish between two instant (which they call atomic) events: culminations and points which correspond to our achievements and semelfactives respectively. Culmination events are resultative [+consequent] whereas points are not [-consequent] [8, 15–28].

A detailed analysis of semelfactives is given in C. Smith's research. In her classification semelfactives are dynamic, non-durative and atelic events [11, 19].

W. Croft and S. Rothstein do not distinguish semelfactives into a fifth aspectual class. In W. Croft's classification they are called cyclic achievements [5, 24]. S. Rothstein treats them as a subclass of activities [9, 29].

B. Comrie argues that a semelfactive verb should be treated as a complete action with no explicit internal temporal structure, though he concedes that there can be a situation when such verbs as **flap**, **cough** (meaning a single cough, flap) may be split into stages:

*"...a situation where someone is commenting on a slowed down film which incorporates someone's single cough, as for instance in an anatomy lecture: here, it would be quite appropriate for the lecturer to comment on the relevant part of the film and now the subject is coughing, even in referring to a single cough, since the single act of coughing has now been extended, and is clearly durative, in that the relevant film sequence lasts for a certain period of time"* [4, 43].

This view on semelfactives draws them closer to the aspectual class of accomplishments rather than achievements. We may distinctly single out stages in the process of **eating an apple** (**eat an apple** – an accomplishment) in the same way as we can see an explicit trajectory in the process of **flapping wings** (**flap wings** – a semelfactive). However, the stages of **blinking**, **winking**, **sneezing**, **coughing** and **flapping** are so short that normally we do not identify them in everyday communication. The imperfective (atelic) reading of semelfactives in common perception is the iteration of one and the same holistic event and not of its stages. The selection of the empirical material from the British national corpus (BNC) testifies to the fact.

*He imagined a nightmare scene where every time you **blinked**, or blew your nose, or scratched an itch, the auctioneer would up the price, until you found you had paid eight thousand pounds for a snooker ball* (BNC ACV 1062).

*'He's being Christian again', said Camille, and she and Sam **giggled** intermittently for the rest of the evening* (BNC G1D 2162).

*'I only **sneezed** a couple of times...but you know what mother is like', Patrick said defensively* (BNC EVG 745).

The iterative meaning of the verbs under analysis is specified by the adverbial modifiers, determiners **every time**, **intermittently**, **a couple of times**.

This observation allows us to treat semelfactives as instant stageless actions [-stages] in the same way as achievements. Nonetheless, contrary to achievements, semelfactives do not presuppose a change of state – a transition from one state into another [-change]. The examples above show that after a single event of **flapping**, **shaking** etc. may follow the same identical event. The iteration of these events is summed into one more extended cumulative event in the denotation of the same verb. S. Rothstein defines this process as S-summing (or singular summing): "S-summing is a general mechanism which can sum entities and turn the result into a singular object" [10, 45]. Two predicates can be closed under the S-summing operation only if they are temporally adjacent and have the same set of arguments. This excludes the possibility of these predicates to denote a change of state. "It is impossible for an event of change in P to be succeeded immediately by another event of same event type, since (assuming sameness of participants) any event of change involving a change from  $\neg a$  to  $a$  must be followed by a change back from  $a$  to  $\neg a$  before another event of the same kind can occur" [9, 189]. Achievements denote an event of change since one cannot arrive in place A (from place B) several times without previous returning to place B.

S-summing operation makes semelfactives in their atelic reading (according to Ukrainian terminology, following V. Khrakovskiy, they are known as multiplicative verbs or multiplicatives [3]) very similar to activities. The difference lies in the natural atomicity of semelfactives. Minimal events of **jumping**, **sneezing**, **blinking** are naturally individuable and lexically accessible while the minimal events of **walking** or **reading** are not. If one knocks for some time we can even count how many knocks one performs. The quantity can even be specified by the context.

*I **sneezed twice** and got out of there pronto* (BNC HJC 944).

*He **knocked three times**, and the door swung open* (BNC H89 390).

While he ate and listened, the telephone **rang three times** on minor parish business and Flora badgered him to read a pious poem she had just written (BNC CMJ 2286).

Semelfactives as well as achievements are telic events, though their telicity has different roots. Semelfactives are telic due to their natural atomicity. Achievements are telic because they denote an event of change. Telic predicates used in the progressive aspect cause the so-called imperfective paradox. An activity action in progress such as *Tom is running*, *Ted is walking* entails that *Tom ran*, *Ted walked*. The explanation for this comes from the difference between heterogeneous and homogeneous predicates. The verbs *to walk*, *to run* belong to the category of an activity and are homogeneous on each interval of their performance. If one says that *he ran or walked from 9 till 11*, it means that *at 10 and at 10:30 he also ran or walked*. An achievement verb (such as *win*, *arrive*) is heterogeneous, it has a telic point and the action can be reported as performed only when the culmination is reached. A logical assumption is that semelfactives as telic events also give rise to the imperfective paradox. Theoretically they do if we mean *one jump*, *one skip*, *one cough*. But the selection and further analysis of the examples from BNC show that the most natural interpretation of the semelfactives in progress is an atelic iterative action. Therefore, in this interpretation, they do not cause the imperfective paradox.

*'I was jumping up and down in my seat as I heard the end of the race', he said* (BNC A40 453).

*But the Doctor had turned on his heel and was almost skipping along the right-hand corridor* (BNC F9X 2078).

Considering the fact that semelfactives and achievements denote telic actions, it is logical to assume that they frequently collocate with the adverbial modifier *in a time*. However, the examples from BNC illustrate that in this context they have only a future action interpretation. This observation grounds the fact that both aspectual classes should be treated as stageless, without a complex inner structure. The modifier *in a time* shows when the action will take place and not how long it may last.

*I'm gonna sneeze in a minute* (BNC KC2 6283).

*I will give her a ring in a few minutes, but I suspect that you and daddy have to have a bath together* (BNC KBH 4526).

Semelfactive verbs without any specifying context are ambiguous between telic and atelic (iterative) meaning. However this ambiguity is eliminated when a light verb construction<sup>1</sup> is used instead of a corresponding verb:

*bark – to give a bark*

*clap – give a clap*

*clink – make a clink*

*dart – make a dart*

*gasp – give/make a gasp*

*gaze – give/get a gaze*

*giggle – give/have a giggle*

*Nosey reluctantly slunk back to Sharpe, then saw something across the river and gave a bark of warning* (BNC CMP 415).

*It made a dart for the door as he came in, but he was too quick for it* (BNC GUD 1259).

A pronominal modifier specifies whether it is the action of single occurrence or a multiplicative action. A quantifier states precisely how many times the action took place.

*He gave me a few quick, curious glances from time to time as I slowly sipped my coffee, but he did not appear to have heard any of the rumours* (BNC ADA 487)

<sup>1</sup> Light verb constructions (also known as fixed verbo-nominal phrases) are formed by means of the verbs of broad semantics (such as *do*, *make*, *give*, *take*, *get*, etc.) and a predicative noun. The nominal component is a semantic centre of a construction. A verb is a functional component.

*He took several gulps before sealing it and pocketing it* (BNC CRE 1327).

Analysing the examples from BNC we have noted that the plurality of the nominal components of semelfactive LVCs always triggers the iterative interpretation. Achievement LVCs in this case are ambiguous: may denote both an action of single occurrence and a multiple action.

*An hour and a half into the debate all four for the first time gave succinct answers in agreement to one question and were rewarded with a cheer from the floor!* (BNC C88 108) – [+telic].

*When asked questions he gave one word answers, though he used two words on occasion, as in 'boys swimming', 'wet play'* (BNC CRS 1506) – [-telic].

*The SNP has had Labour doing somersaults for months on Opposition cross-party co-operation* (BNC K5M 976) – [-telic].

The comparative analysis of semelfactives and achievements allows us to conclude that both denote telic instant actions though differ in the origin of telicity. This difference explains why semelfactives do not denote a change of state (a transition from one state into another) and can be summed into one iterative event. The analysis carried out in this study proves the necessity of distinguishing these types of verbs into two independent aspectual classes. The divergent and convergent features of semelfactives and achievements are summed up in *Table 1*.

Table 1

Convergent and divergent features of achievements and semelfactives

Criterion	Achievement	Semelfactive
[+/-telic]	[+telic]	[+telic]
[+/-stages]	[-stages]	[-stages]
[+/-S-summing]	[-S-summing]	[+S-summing]

An instant action in English can be expressed even by states depending on the context. In this case a so-called aspectual coercion takes place. The predicate changes its initial (also known as default) aspectual meaning under the influence of context and is subjected to reinterpretation. The default aspectual meaning of the verb *understand* is a state. However, in sentences below it has changed it into an instant meaning.

*His French aside, he was the first guy who understood immediately one of my pitiful Arabic sentences – so perhaps he wasn't that simple after all* (BNC FSO 1551).

*He understood at once why she had not told him; he remembered the glass of milk in the café, and for the first time in weeks he was able to weep* (BNC C8S 3011).

J. Dölling argues that accomplishments acquire an instant meaning in collocations with the adverbial modifier *at a time*. In her view, an achievement is the initial and the final stage in an accomplishment's structure. Thus, when an accomplishment verb is combined with *at a time* only its initial stage is lexicalized and an inchoative coercion takes place: *Julia climbed at seven o'clock sharp* [6, 214].

In the course of the analysis we have observed that adverbial modifiers, the perfective and the progressive may change the default aspectual class of a predicate. Aspect is a context dependent category and should be analysed from this point of view.

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#### **Садова Галина. Вираження миттєвої дії у сучасній англійській мові: досягнення та семelfактиви.**

Присвячено аспектуальній семантиці семelfактивів та досягнень. Підходи до трактування та розмежування цих двох аспектуальних класів доволі суперечливі. В історії лінгвістики семelfактиви трактували як підклас досягнень або діяльностей. Дослідження, здійснене нами, наголошує на неправомірності їх ототожнення. Висновки та спостереження проілюстровано та обґрунтовано прикладами із Британського національного корпусу. Семelfактиви та досягнення визначено як граничні, миттєві (без складної внутрішньої структури) предикати. Основою граничності досягнень є здатність позначати зміну стану. Семelfактиви граничні завдяки своїй природній атомарності. Оскільки останнім не властиво виражати зміну, перехід у новий стан, вони піддаються операції додавання, утворюючи при цьому мультиплікативне дієслово. Стадії цього дієслова (кванти) можна виокремити в повнозначні самостійні лексеми. Саме цей факт відрізняє семelfактиви в ітеративній інтепретації від аспектуального класу діяльностей. Семelfактивне дієслово завжди двозначне, адже може

позначати і однократну, і багатократну дію. Усталені дієслівно-іменникові словосполучення, завдяки артиклям, займенникам, числівникам допомагають усунути цю двозначність. Контекст має властивість змінювати початковий аспектуальний клас предиката. А відтак навіть стани та виконання, у певному контексті, можуть позначати миттєву дію.

**Ключові слова:** аспектуальність, граничність, ітеративність, семельфактив, досягнення, виконання, діяльності, стани.

**Садовая Галина. Выражение мгновенного действия в современном английском языке: достижения и семельфактивы.** Посвящено аспектуальной семантике семельфактивов и достижений. Подходы к трактовке и разграничению этих двух аспектуальных классов довольно противоречивы. В истории лингвистики семельфактивы расценивали как подкласс достижений или деятельностей. Исследование, проведенное нами, отмечает неправомерность их отождествления. Выводы и наблюдения проиллюстрированы и обоснованы примерами из Британского национального корпуса. Семельфактивы и достижения определены как предельные, мгновенные (без сложной внутренней структуры) предикаты. Основой предельности достижений является способность обозначать изменение состояния. Семельфактивы предельные благодаря своей природной атомарности. Поскольку последним не свойственно выражать изменение, переход в новое состояние, они подвергаются операции суммирования, образуя при этом мультипликативный глагол. Стадии этого глагола (кванты) можно выделить в самостоятельные лексемы. Именно этот факт отличает семельфактивы в итеративной интерпретации от аспектуального класса деятельностей. Семельфактивный глагол всегда есть двусмысленным, ведь может обозначать как однократное, так и многократное действие. Устойчивые глагольно-существительные словосочетания, благодаря артиклям, местоимениям, числительным помогают устранить эту двусмысленность. Контекст имеет свойство изменять начальный аспектуальный класс предиката. Следовательно, даже состояния и выполнения в определенном контексте могут обозначать мгновенное действие.

**Ключевые слова:** аспектуальность, предельность, итеративность, семельфактив, достижение, выполнение, деятельности, состояния.

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*Тетяна Семенюк*

## **ТАКТИКА ВКЛЮЧЕННЯ ІКОНІЧНИХ ЗАСОБІВ У РЕАЛІЗАЦІЮ СТРАТЕГІЇ ПРИВЕРНЕННЯ УВАГИ В НІМЕЦЬКОМОВНІЙ РЕКЛАМІ СПОЖИВЧИХ ТОВАРІВ**

Комунікативний вплив на адресата – неодмінний складник рекламної комунікації – реалізується за допомогою стратегій і тактик. Стратегія привернення уваги, як одна з першочергових стратегій реклами, втілюється через залучення вербальних, невербальних і паравербальних засобів. Зацікавленість споживачів рекламою через використання невербальних засобів включає такі тактики: 1) включення іконічних засобів у семіотичний простір тексту; 2) введення піктограм й ідеограм в окремі структурно-композиційні складові реклами (заголовки, слоган, логотип і т. п.) та 3) залучення візуальних еквівалентів мовних тропів (метафор, метонімії, гіпербол і т. п.) Найефективнішими іконічними засобами привернення уваги в німецькомовних рекламних текстах споживчих товарів виступають фотографії потенційних споживачів (перш за все авторитетних осіб) та рекламованої продукції.

**Ключові слова:** реклама, стратегія, тактика, стратегія привернення уваги, іконічні засоби, фотографії.

**Постановка наукової проблеми та її значення.** Реклама є особливою формою комунікації, котра стрімко завойовує простір друкованих та електронних засобів масової інформації. Через рекламу рекламодавці намагаються інформувати потенційну цільову аудиторію про певні товари чи послуги та переконати їх до необхідних дій. Здійснення ефективного комунікативного впливу на психіку споживачів є основною метою рекламних текстів. Для досягнення цієї мети рекламісти вдаються до застосування різноманітних