A FUNCTIONAL VIEW OF THE ASPECT OF THE NOMINAL PHRASE IN ENGLISH

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Abstract: *This paper studies the notion of aspect within the nominal phrase in English. Dik (1997) and Van Valin and LaPolla (1997) define nominal aspect in terms of the mass/count distinction and other notions such as ensemble, mass, set, proper, count and collective nouns. Count nouns are those that refer to things, people or places that can be counted, whereas mass nouns refer to substances, things, or abstract entities that cannot be counted. However, some of these mass nouns can be made countable when inserted in count structures of the* type a carton of milk, a tea bag, *etc. And, in turn, some count nouns may be used to refer to a mass, as shown in* We had chicken for dinner. *For this reason, here I distinguish between noun aspect – an intrinsic, paradigmatic property of the noun - and nominal phrase aspect – an extrinsic, syntagmatic property of the noun.*

In order to study the aspect of the nominal phrase, I make use of Givón´s (1993) list of pre-nominal modifiers, in their singular and plural versions, in combination with count and mass nouns. This way, the most basic realizations are accounted for.

The results of this study are offered at core and phrase level, according to Van Valin and LaPolla´s (1997) idea that nominal phrase operators realized by, among others, determiners and noun classifiers, parallel the scope principle of operators in the clause. The examples displayed are by no means exhaustive, but I hope they will suffice to illustrate the way aspect varies within the nominal phrase.

Keywords: nominal phrase aspect, noun aspect, pre-nominal modifiers.

Resumen: *Este artículo versa sobre la noción de* aspecto *dentro del sintagma nominal en inglés. Dik (1997) y Van Valin & LaPolla (1997) definen el aspecto nominal en torno a la dicotomía contable/incontable y a otras nociones como conjunto, nombre propio y colectivo. Los nombres contables hacen referencia a aquellas cosas, personas o lugares que pueden contarse, mientras que los incontables hacen referencia a aquellas sustancias, cosas o entidades abstractas que no pueden ser contadas. No obstante, algunos de estos nombres incontables pueden convertirse en contables al ser insertados en estructuras contables del tipo una caja de leche, una bolsita de té, etc., y, a su vez, algunos nombres contables pueden usarse para hacer referencia a un incontable, como en Tomamos pollo para cenar. Por esta razón, aquí distingo entre aspecto nominal –una característica intrínseca y paradigmática del nombre – y aspecto del sintagma nominal – una característica extrínseca y sintagmática del nombre.*

Para estudiar el aspecto del sintagma nominal he utilizado la lista de modificadores prenominales de Givón (1993), tanto en plural como en singular, y en combinación con nombres contables e incontables. De este modo, trato de cubrir el mayor número posible de realizaciones básicas del sintagma nominal.

Siguiendo la idea de Van Valin & LaPolla (1997) de que los operadores del sintagma nominal –determinantes y clasificadores nominales – reflejan a los operadores de la clásula en cuanto a su ámbito de actuación en la estructura por capas, expongo los resultados de este estudio a nivel de núcleo y sintagma. Los ejemplos presentados no son exhaustivos, pero espero que sirvan para ilustrar el modo en el que el aspecto varía dentro del sintagma nominal.

Palabras clave: aspecto del sintagma nominal, aspecto nominal, modificadores pre-nominales.

1. Introduction

Dik (1997a: 163) and Van Valin and LaPolla[1] (1997: 56) define *nominal aspect* in terms of the mass/count distinction and other notions such as ensemble, mass, set, proper, count and collective nouns[2]. Count nouns are those that refer to things, people or places that can be counted, such as *one car/two cars, one woman/three women, one garage/two garages*, etc. As these examples show, these nouns can be made plural. Mass nouns refer[3] to substances, things, or abstract entities that cannot be counted, such as *oxygen, powder, milk, tea, information*, etc. Therefore, in principle, they cannot be made plural. However, some of these mass nouns can be made countable when inserted in count structures of the type *a carton of* milk, *a tea bag, one kilo of* meat, etc. And, in turn, some count nouns may be used to refer to a mass, as shown in (1). Bunt (1985) [cited n Dik (1997a: 141)] refers to the latter as a "massified" individual.

(1) Examples taken from Dik (1997a: 141)
a. I saw *a chicken* in the garden (count)
b. We had *chicken* for dinner (mass)

For this reason, here I will distinguish between *noun aspect* – an intrinsic, paradigmatic property of the noun - and *nominal phrase aspect* – an extrinsic, syntagmatic property of the noun. Noun aspect shall be dealt with in terms of count/mass, whereas nominal phrase aspect shall be defined in terms of telicity. Such terminology appears adequate, given the parallelism existing between the perfective/imperfective (or, rather, temporally bounded versus temporally unbounded) aspect of verbs and the count/mass distinction in nouns (Rijkhoff (1992) and Jackedoff (1990), cited in VVLP (1997: 57)).

> It has often been observed that the bounded/unbounded (event/process, telic/atelic) distinction is strongly parallel to the count/mass distinction in NPs. An important criterion for the count/mass distinction has to do with the description of parts of an entity. For instance, a part of *an apple* (count) cannot itself be described as an apple; but any part of a body of *water* (mass) can itself be described as *water*…This same criterion applies to the event/process distinction: any part of *John ran toward the house* (process) can itself be described as *John ran toward the house* (unless the part gets smaller than a single stride) … It has also been observed that plurals behave in many respects like mass nouns and that repeated events behave like processes. (Jackendoff (1990), cited in VVLP (1997: 57)).

2. Methodology

Since telicity is paradigmatically defined, some factors extrinsic to the noun form part of the definition of telicity, and the most fundamental ones of these are reference and number.

In order to cover as many realizations as possible I will make use of Givón´s (1993a: 249-256) inventory of pre-nominal modifiers and study it in combination with both its singular and plural form (see (2) below for illustration). Furthermore, I will include, when possible, mass/count counterparts for comparison[4].

(2) Examples of the inventory of nominal phrases under analysis
a. At core level (partitive):
- *Any of* + count plural (or collective): Any of those boys will do (telic)
- *Any of* + count singular: I don´t want to give any of the book away (atelic)
- *Any of* + mass singular: Do not eat any of the ice-cream after it has been placed in any of the equipment (atelic)
- *Any of* + mass plural: To get the exchange rates for any of the 50 currencies, select the desired currencies from the list below (telic)
b. At core level (indefinite quantifiers-determiners):
- *Some* + count plural: Some women like football (telic)
- *Some* + count singular: He saw some woman prowling around here (telic)
- *Some* + mass singular: I need some money (atelic)
- *Some* + mass plural: He tried some wines during his stay in California (telic)

Several factors intervene in the definition of the aspectual quality of the nominal phrases. Some of them are syntactic, such as reference (e.g., the incompatibility of mass nouns with numerals or with determiners such as 'a' or 'every') and number (mass terms cannot appear in the plural) ; some others are semantic, such as the 'cumulativity of reference', put forward by Quine (1960) and the 'divisivity of reference', postulated by Cheng[5] (1973) [both cited in Gillon (1999)]. The 'cumulativity of reference' says that "if a mass term such as *water* is true of each of two items, then it is true of the two items taken together". Thus, if *a* is *flour* and *b* is flour*, a* and *b* together are *flour*, whereas if *a* is *a boy* and *b* is *a boy*, *a* and *b* together are not *a boy*. The 'divisivity of reference', on the other hand, claims that "any part of something denoted by a mass noun is denoted by the same mass noun". Thus, whereas a part (or piece) of cake is cake, a part of a woman cannot be said to be a woman. In other words, mass nouns and atelic nominal phrases can be divided into parts which, whereas count nouns and telic nominal phrases cannot. Mass nouns and atelic nominal phrases cannot be taken as well-delimited individuals or bounded entities, but are materials or substances that can be weighed and/or measured. These are the main syntactic and semantic criteria around which I will structure the definition of the aspectual quality of the nominal phrases. The syntactic criteria are somehow taken for granted, given that they are already included in the selection of the examples under analysis. Hence, most of the argumentation will be built around semantic criteria.

According to VVLP (1997: 58), NP operators realized by, among others, determiners and noun classifiers (e.g. a *carton of* milk, two *litres of* milk, etc.), parallel the scope principle of operators in the clause. Thus, quantifiers modify the core of the NP and are concerned with quantification (many, few, every, etc.) and negation (i.e., no), whereas locality operators modify the NP as a whole, and they are usually formally expressed by means of determiners (articles and demonstratives[6]). Therefore, the basic NP aspectual operators hierarchy could be illustrated as follows:
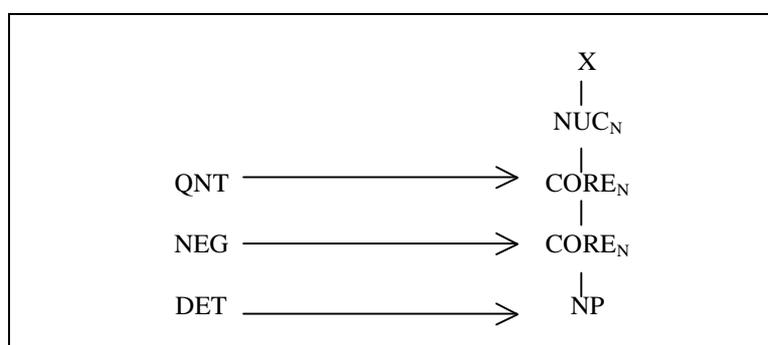

Figure 1. Basic NP aspectual operators hierarchy

Consequently, I will organize the range of basic realizations of the NP according to their scope:
- AT CORE LEVEL
  i.   Partitive definite quantifiers
  ii.   Indefinite quantifiers-determiners
- AT PHRASE LEVEL
  i.   Definite article
  ii.   Indefinite article
  iii. Demonstratives
  iv.   Possessive modifiers

3. Discussion of the analysis

The analysis of the inventory of the most canonical realizations of the nominal phrase in English has provided the following data:
- AT CORE LEVEL:

Quantifiers partake of different structures, behaving either as partitive definite quantifiers or as indefinite determiners. When definite, the quantifier is followed by the preposition 'of' and by a definite determiner such as 'the' or 'that' among others. When indefinite, the possessive preposition disappears and the quantifier is directly followed by the head noun. This formal distribution inversely reflects the scope of the nominal operators: quantifiers operate at core level whereas determiners operate at phrase level. In other words, determiners have quantifiers within their scope.

The differences existing between the two groups of quantifiers are not restricted to form. They also differ in the way they modify the noun, "massifying[7]" it in some occasions, "countifying" it in others. Let us go back to the tables above to see the effect they all have on both count and mass nouns:

SOME OF:

- When the singular, count noun 'apple' is inserted in the partitive structure 'some of + determiner', the resulting nominal phrase is atelic, since the noun 'apple' is presented as a substance or a material rather than as an individual. Even if, as Jackendoff (1991) claims, "a part of *an apple* (count) cannot itself be described as an apple," in this context the shape of the apple shades off, resembling a body of water or flour –i.e., a mere amount of material - which can be measured and weighed. In principle, this "massification" process does not have any special restrictions, for it can be applied even to animated entities, as in 'I documented some of that woman in the film.'
- When the plural, count noun 'people' is inserted in the partitive structure 'some of + determiner', the resulting nominal phrase is telic. This seems to apply to all plural, count nouns.
- When the singular, mass noun 'flour' is inserted in the partitive structure 'some of + determiner', the resulting nominal phrase is atelic. This seems to apply to all singular, mass nouns.
- When the plural, mass noun 'waters' is inserted in the partitive structure 'some of + determiner', the resulting nominal phrase is telic. In this case, the mass noun becomes individualized in terms of, for example, different 'types' of water or 'bottles' of water.

The massification of 'apple' and the 'countification' of flour seem to apply for all cases of singular, count nouns and plural, mass nouns, respectively, when inserted in this structure, but only when permitted**.** That is to say, not all singular, count nouns and plural, mass nouns can combine with partitive structures of this kind.

SOME:

- When the singular, count noun 'woman' is preceded by the indefinite quantifier-determiner 'some', the resulting nominal phrase is telic. By contrast to the partitive structure 'some of', the determiner 'some' does not turn the individual entity into an indeterminate (or mass) structure but projects it as an indefinite entity. Thus, 'some woman' refers to some individual whose identity is not known.
- When the plural, count noun 'women' is preceded by the indefinite quantifier 'some', the resulting nominal phrase is telic. As was the case with 'woman', the determiner 'some' does not turn the individual into an amount of material. Each woman preserves her individuality even if it confers the nominal phrase with a sense of 'group' which can give the impression of a 'human mass'.
- When the singular, mass noun 'money' is preceded by the indefinite quantifier-determiner 'some', the resulting nominal phrase is atelic. This applies to all singular, mass nouns.
- When the plural, mass noun 'wines[8]' is preceded by the indefinite quantifier-determiner 'some', the resulting nominal phrase is telic. The explanation is similar to that offered for the plural, mass noun 'waters': the mass noun becomes individualized in terms of, for example, different 'types' of wine.

ANY OF:

- When the singular, count noun 'book' is inserted in the partitive structure 'any of + determiner', the resulting nominal phrase seems to be atelic, as if it were a mass noun

which can be divided into parts (in this case, pages). The main difference existing between 'Have you read some of the book?" and "Have you read any of the book?" lies in the fact that the former seems to imply a stronger belief on the part of the speaker that the addressee has actually read part of it, whereas the latter implies a certain disbelief. This pattern seems to be restricted to inanimate entities.

- When the plural, count noun 'people' is inserted into the partitive structure 'any of + determiner', the resulting nominal phrase is telic. This seems to apply to all plural, count nouns. In this case, there is no constraint with respect to animate entities because the partitive does not turn it into a mass.
- When the singular, mass noun 'ice-cream' is inserted in the partitive structure 'any of + determiner', the resulting nominal phrase is atelic. This seems to apply to all singular, mass nouns.
- When the plural, mass noun 'currencies' is inserted in the partitive structure 'any of + determiner', the resulting nominal phrase is telic. Once more, the mass noun becomes individualized in terms of 'types' of currency.

ANY:
- When the singular, count noun 'woman' is preceded by the indefinite quantifier-determiner 'any', the resulting nominal phrase is telic. Just like 'some', the determiner 'any' does not turn the individual entity into a mass but presents it as an indefinite entity.
- When the plural, count noun 'suggestions' is preceded by the indefinite quantifier 'any', the resulting nominal phrase is telic.
- When the singular, mass noun 'noise' is preceded by the indefinite quantifier-determiner 'any', the resulting nominal phrase is atelic. This applies to all singular, mass nouns.
- When the plural, mass noun 'noises' is preceded by the indefinite quantifier-determiner 'any', the resulting nominal phrase is telic.

ALL OF:
- When the singular, count (pro)noun 'you' is inserted in the partitive structure 'all of[9]', the resulting nominal phrase seems to be atelic, as was the case with 'some of that woman' above. In both examples, the animated entity designated by the (pro)noun is treated as if it were a mass which can be divided into parts. In the case of 'some of that woman', the speaker/writer depicts only some "part" of that entity, whereas in 'all of you', the speaker/writer puts together all the "parts" of the entity. The expression is equivalent to 'every part of you'.
- When the plural, count noun 'kids' is inserted into the partitive structure 'all of + determiner', the resulting nominal phrase is telic. The difference between the previous case and this one lies in the fact that, when the noun is singular, the entity modified by 'all' is a part of a single entity, whereas in the present structure, the entity modified by 'all' is not a part but a whole entity in itself which forms part of a group. This applies to all plural, count nouns, and is equivalent to the structure 'all + noun', only that the latter confers a more generic reading on the resulting phrase.
- When the singular, mass noun 'nonsense' is inserted in the partitive structure 'all of + determiner', the resulting nominal phrase is atelic. This seems to apply to all singular, mass nouns.
- When the plural, mass noun 'nonsenses' is inserted in the partitive structure 'all of + determiner', the resulting nominal phrase is telic. By contrast to the previous example, the mass noun is made count by using the plural form, which thus denotes 'a number of entities.'

ALL:
- When the singular, count noun 'man' is preceded by the indefinite quantifier-determiner 'all', the resulting nominal phrase is telic. The nominal phrase is thus endowed with a generic reading.
- When the plural, count noun 'soldiers' is preceded by the indefinite quantifier 'all', the resulting nominal phrase is telic. As in the preceding case, the nominal phrase is endowed

with a generic reading, although this effect may be slightly palliated when followed by a postmodifier, as in 'All (the) soldiers in the room saluted the colonel.'
- When the singular, mass noun 'water' is preceded by the indefinite quantifier-determiner 'all', as in 'Suddenly, it was all water around me', the resulting nominal phrase is atelic.
- When the plural, mass noun 'waters' is preceded by the indefinite quantifier-determiner 'all', the resulting nominal phrase is telic (see the explanation provided for 'some waters' above).

NONE OF:
- When the singular, count noun 'lie' is inserted in the partitive structure 'none of + determiner', the resulting nominal phrase is atelic, as happened with 'apple' in 'some of the apple.'
- When the plural, count noun 'friends' is inserted in the partitive structure 'none of + determiner', the resulting nominal phrase is telic.
- This structure is incompatible with singular, mass nouns.
- When the plural, mass noun 'truths' is inserted in the partitive structure 'none of + determiner', the resulting nominal phrase is telic. Once more, the atypical use of plural form of the mass noun turns it into a count noun which can thus be inserted in a structure of this type.

NO:
- When the singular, count noun 'response' is preceded by the indefinite quantifier-determiner 'no', the resulting nominal phrase is telic.
- When the plural, count noun 'questions' is preceded by the indefinite quantifier 'no', the resulting nominal phrase is also telic.
- When the singular, mass noun 'water' is preceded by the indefinite quantifier-determiner 'no', the resulting nominal phrase appears to be atelic. Although some contexts might make room for a telic reading (imagine, for example, a person opening the fridge and finding out that there is not any bottle of water left, in which case 'no water' would metonymically stand for 'not any bottle'), they are usually more unnatural. Furthermore, if the example were to be rephrased, the most natural option would be something like 'There isn´t any water in the building' (atelic) rather than '(?)There isn´t one water in the building' (telic).
- When the plural, mass noun 'waters' is preceded by the indefinite quantifier-determiner 'no', the resulting nominal phrase is telic. In this case, 'water' refers to either 'streams' or 'rivers', 'lakes', etc. Thus, the mass noun is transformed into a count one when inserted in the phrase.

MOST OF:
- When the singular, count (pro)noun 'her' is inserted in the partitive structure 'most of + determiner', the resulting nominal phrase is atelic, as was the case with 'some of that woman' and 'all of you' above.
- When the plural, count noun 'accusers' is inserted in the partitive structure 'most of + determiner', the resulting nominal phrase is telic.
- When the singular, mass noun 'work' is inserted in the partitive structure 'most of + determiner', the resulting nominal phrase is atelic.
- When the plural, mass noun 'times' is inserted in the partitive structure 'most of + determiner', the resulting nominal phrase is telic. Note that the previous example – 'Most of this work is based on Peter´s ideas' - can be rewritten as 'Much (of this) work is based on Peter´s ideas' (atelic), whereas the present example – 'You are right most of the times' – would be rephrased as 'You are right many (of the) times' (telic).

LOTS OF:
- Singular, count nouns do not fit the pattern 'lots of + determiner.' If the determiner is erased, however, as in 'She was eating lots of cake' (atelic), the resulting phrase is correct.

- When the plural, count noun 'suggestions' is inserted in the partitive structure 'lots of + determiner', the resulting nominal phrase is telic.
- Singular, mass nouns do not seem to fit the pattern 'lots of + determiner,' which requires a plural noun.
- When the plural, mass noun 'loves' is inserted in the partitive structure 'lots of + determiner', the resulting nominal phrase is telic.

ONE OF:
- Singular, count nouns do not seem to fit the pattern 'one of + determiner.'
- When the plural, count noun 'men' is inserted in the partitive structure 'one of + determiner', the resulting nominal phrase is telic.
- Singular, count nouns do not seem to fit the pattern 'one of + determiner.'
- When the plural, mass noun 'waters' is inserted in the partitive structure 'one of + determiner', the resulting nominal phrase is telic.

ONE:
- When the singular, count noun 'man' is preceded by the indefinite quantifier-determiner 'one', the resulting nominal phrase is telic.
- Plural, count nouns do not seem to fit the pattern 'one + noun'
- When the singular, mass noun 'sand' is preceded by the indefinite quantifier-determiner 'one', the resulting nominal phrase is telic. In this case, 'sand' is to be understood as 'types of sand.'
- Plural, mass nouns do not seem to fit the pattern 'one + noun'

TWO OF:
- Singular, count nouns do not seem to fit the pattern 'two of + determiner.'
- When the plural, count noun 'men' is inserted in the partitive structure 'two of + determiner', the resulting nominal phrase is telic.
- Singular, count nouns do not seem to fit the pattern 'two of + determiner.'
- When the plural, mass noun 'loves' is inserted in the partitive structure 'two of + determiner', the resulting nominal phrase is telic.

TWO:
- Singular, count nouns do not seem to fit the pattern 'two + noun'
- When the plural, count noun 'men' is preceded by the indefinite quantifier-determiner 'two', the resulting nominal phrase is telic.
- Singular, mass nouns do not seem to fit the pattern 'two + noun'
- When the plural, mass noun 'waters' is preceded by the indefinite quantifier-determiner 'two', the resulting nominal phrase is telic.

A NUMBER OF:
- Singular, count nouns do not seem to fit the pattern 'a number of + determiner.' In the case that a pronoun like, for example, 'me' were acceptable – obviously, in a very specific context such as 'When I entered the room I discovered, fascinated, that there was a number of 'me' in there for the casting' – the only possible interpretation would be iterative/repetitive. That iterative character of the nominal phrase would make it compatible with the requirement that it must be plural. Thus, 'me' would be interpreted in that context as 'copies or doubles of me.'
- When the plural, count noun 'books' is inserted in the partitive structure 'a number of + determiner', the resulting nominal phrase is telic.
- Singular, mass nouns do not seem to fit the pattern 'a number of + determiner.'
- When the plural, mass noun 'costs' is inserted in the partitive structure 'a number of + determiner', the resulting nominal phrase is telic.

ANOTHER:
- When the singular, count noun 'day' is preceded by the indefinite quantifier-determiner 'another', the resulting nominal phrase is telic.
- Plural, count nouns do not seem to fit the pattern 'another + noun'

- When the singular, mass noun 'whisky' is preceded by the indefinite quantifier-determiner 'another', the resulting nominal phrase is telic. Whisky is to be interpreted as 'glass of whisky' in this context. This way, the mass noun is turned into a count noun and can thus be used in combination with 'another.'
- Plural, mass nouns do not seem to fit the pattern 'another + noun'

***MANY & MUCH*:**

'Many' and 'much' are restricted to one single context: 'many' can only be accompanied by plural, count nouns, and 'much' can only be accompanied by singular, mass nouns:

- When the plural, count noun 'flowers' is preceded by the indefinite quantifier-determiner 'two', the resulting nominal phrase is telic.
- When the singular, mass noun 'unhappiness' is preceded by the indefinite quantifier-determiner 'two', the resulting nominal phrase is atelic.

***LITTLE & A LITTLE*:**

In the same line as 'many' and 'much' above, the use of 'little' and 'a little' is restricted to just one context for each determiner, although in this case it is the same for both of them: singular, mass nouns.

- When the singular, mass noun 'luck' is preceded by the indefinite quantifier-determiner 'little', the resulting nominal phrase is atelic.
- When the singular, mass noun 'luck' is preceded by the indefinite quantifier-determiner 'a little', the resulting nominal phrase is atelic. In this case, 'a little luck' is equivalent to 'a bit of luck.'

It should be noted that, as Jackendoff (1991: 104) points out, negative (*few* and) *little* belong to a different category from nonnegative (*a few* and) *a little*. Nonetheless, I will disregard such irregularities for the moment being.

***EVERY*:**

The determiner 'every' combines with singular, count nouns only:

- When the singular, count noun 'person' is preceded by the indefinite quantifier-determiner 'every', the resulting nominal phrase is telic.

If the mass noun can be interpreted as count without being made plural, then the combination 'every + mass noun' will also succeed:

- When the singular, mass noun 'flour' is preceded by the indefinite quantifier-determiner 'every', the resulting nominal phrase is telic. 'Flour' must be understood as 'type of flour' or 'packet of flour' as in, for example, 'Every flour is different, so you have to find the one you like best.'
- Givón (1993) also deals with 'only' as an indefinite determiner; nonetheless, I leave it out of the analysis because it is, as the author himself explains, only *superficially in this group*.

• AT PHRASE LEVEL:

***DEFINITE ARTICLE*:**

The definite article combines with both count and mass nouns in both their plural and singular forms. As derives from the examples above, when 'the' precedes count nouns (both plural and singular), the resulting combination is telic. When 'the' precedes mass nouns, the resulting combination can be either telic or atelic, depending on whether the referent of the nominal phrase can be presented as a type of or a recipient for that entity or not (e.g., 'the water' in 'Pass me the water' is telic because stands for 'the bottle/glass/jar of water'). Obviously, this is not possible for all nominal phrases; in fact, 'water' is a rather exceptional together with 'flour' and a few other mass entities which can be carried in recipients and, consequently, interpreted either as mass or count phrases. Furthermore, 'water' has the peculiarity that it can be used in its plural form and still be regarded as mass, as in 'The waters are calm', which is not a common feature of other nouns.

***INDEFINITE ARTICLE*:**

The indefinite article only combines with singular nouns. Furthermore, these are count most of the times. Nonetheless, it is possible to find examples such as 'Last week I tried a water

which tasted of strawberry', where 'water' stands for 'a type of water.' In both cases, the resulting nominal phrase is telic.

DEMONSTRATIVES:

Demonstratives work in the same way as the definite article 'the,' only that they change their morphology for the plural (i.e., *this* and *that* become *these* and *those*).

POSSESSIVE MODIFIERS:

Possessive modifiers also behave like the definite article 'the,' but their combination with certain types of nouns is slightly more restricted. For example, possessive modifiers cannot combine with plural, mass nouns like 'waters' in a context like the atelic one presented above: '*My waters are calm.'

4. Conclusions

In general terms, the data above suggest that:

1. When partitive definite quantifiers are followed by a plural, count noun, the resulting nominal phrase is telic.
2. When partitive definite quantifiers are followed by a plural, mass noun, the entity referred to by the resulting nominal phrase is presented as discrete or bounded. Recall that not all mass nouns can be made plural; rather, this phenomenon is restricted to those nouns whose referents can be classified into types and/or carried in/packed into containers such as bottles, packets, glasses, etc. The resulting nominal phrase is, consequently, telic. 'Water' is quite an exceptional noun which can be made plural and still be telic, as in 'I´ve sailed some of these waters,' referring to the water of just one sea.
3. When partitive definite quantifiers are followed by a singular, count noun, the resulting nominal phrase is atelic. Not all count nouns comply with this pattern.
4. When partitive definite quantifiers are followed by a singular, mass noun, the resulting nominal phrase is atelic. Similarly to the previous case, not all mass nouns comply with this pattern.

As regards indefinite quantifiers-determiners, it is not possible to establish generalizations like the ones presented above for partitive quantifiers because they vary not only according to whether the noun is mass/count and singular/plural but also from determiner to determiner. Furthermore, as can be observed in the examples above, many indefinite determiners show many restrictions with respect to the types of nouns they can combine with. Serve as illustration the pair 'much/many' which combine with only mass and only count nouns, respectively.

Finally, at phrase level, we have seen that the definite article, the demonstratives and the possessive modifiers seem to behave similarly: when they combine with count nouns, the resulting phrase is telic; when they are followed by a mass noun, the resulting phrase can be either telic or atelic, depending on whether the referent of the nominal phrase can be presented as a type of or a recipient for that entity or not. As regards the indefinite article, it combines with singular nouns only, and the resulting nominal phrase is telic.

The examples given here are by no means exhaustive, but I hope they will suffice to illustrate the way aspect varies within the nominal phrase, as well as the way I will analyse the examples of the corpus.

Notes

[1] Henceforth, VVLP.

[2] In this work I will focus on the mass/count distinction only. For further information on the classification of nominal subcategories, see Keenan and Comrie (1979), Brinton (1991), and Rijkhoff (2002), among others.

[3] I am aware that, as Dik (1997) and Rijkhoff (2002: 28) among others explain, the referents of nouns and nominal phrases are mental constructs of entities in the real world. However, in order to avoid

overburdened formulations, I will henceforth use statements like "this noun/nominal phrase refers to a certain entity" or similar.

[4] For reasons of space, I only include the examples in (2) for illustration.

[5] Despite the problems posed by these two criteria and those pointed out by Gillon (1999), I take for granted their validity as a reference point for the definition of the aspect of the nominal phrase.

[6] VVLP (1997: 62) argue that there exists cross-linguistic evidence that articles differ from demonstratives because the latter are pronominal in nature and can therefore occur as referring expressions on their own. However, this distinction seems to be irrelevant in English, where both share the same lexical category and have a similar representation in the layered structure of the NP.

[7] This is an *ad hoc* coinage of the verbs 'to massify' and 'to countify' to designate those cases in which a count noun is turned into a mass noun and vice versa, respectively. I have coined the first one after Bunt´s (1985) idea of "massified individuals."

[8] In those cases in which mass nouns can be made plural, they are automatically endowed with a quality proper of count nouns; hence, they behave as such in the new context. It must be noted that not all mass nouns can be made plural; the analysis suggests that, among others, those which can be classified as types or carried in a recipient meet the appropriate requirements.

[9] The determiner is excluded from the partitive structure because pronouns cannot be preceded by any except for rather especial cases, such as 'The "she" he uttered was heard by the most people in the room.'

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