

A-telic perfectives. The feel-like periphrasis in Eastern Abruzzese

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“*Tenè* psych state”, or feel-like periphrasis, expresses a volitive state involving a need. It is found in Eastern Abruzzese, an Upper Southern Italo-Romance variety. It features a dative experiencer, the verb *tené* (‘hold’) in the third person singular, and the past participle of a lexical verb, as in (1):

- (1) *Fossacesia*
- | | | |
|-----------|----------------|-------------|
| Me | t-e | magnate. |
| to=me.DAT | holds-3SG.PRES | eaten.PP.SG |
- ‘I feel like eating.’

Two aspects of this construction are particularly intriguing: first, the necessity reading is puzzling, as no verbs of need are present; second, the periphrasis expresses an *irrealis* state, it refers to a not-yet-fulfilled wish, but it features a past participle, which usually refers to completed events.

This periphrasis offers interesting evidence that telicity and perfectivity/event completeness do not go hand in hand. We will show that the event described by the embedded clause is [-telic], despite the presence of a participle, while at the same time being perfective, as shown by the presence of participial morphology.

(A-)telicity The participle in *tenè* psych states is perfective and encodes the perfect (Iatridou, Anagnostopoulou & Izvorski 2001). Participle in Italo-Romance is usually associated with event telicity. We wish to show, however, that this is not the case for Abruzzese; the event expressed by the lexical verb is a-telic. If the verb is inherently telic, its telicity is removed by scrapping off the object, for instance. Otherwise, only a-telic predicates are allowed.

Following Krifka’s *predicate mapping* hypothesis (Krifka 1989, 1992, 1998), we assume that telicity (as per Vendler 1967) can be considered as the introduction of a Set Terminal Point. This allows predicate mapping, i.e. the creation of an isomorphic relation between the (gradual) object, if any, and the event. The presence vs absence of an object, as well as the nature of the object itself, determine the inner aspectuality of the verb. In other words, the lexical semantics of the verb or its tense/aspectual specification do not determine telicity entirely. The presence of a quantized object, which can be mapped onto the event, is the crucial element to create telicity.

In the case of our feel-like periphrasis, the inner aspectual specification of the event is *not* telic, despite the presence of past-participial morphology, and despite the use of some telic (transitive) predicates. Sorgini (2017) shows in fact that the periphrasis admits activity predicates, in the sense of Vendler (1967). These predicates are [+dynamic], [+durative] and [-telic].

Structurally, the predicate must be realized by unergative verbs (like *work*, *yawn*), or transitive verbs where the object must necessarily be dropped (like, for instance, *eat*). Unaccusatives are not allowed, as they usually lexicalize telic predicates (2)

- (2) *Me te crisciute.
- | | | |
|-----------|----------------|-------------|
| to=me.DAT | holds.3SG.PRES | grown.PP.SG |
|-----------|----------------|-------------|
- ‘I feel like growing’

As for transitive verbs: they are allowed, as we said, but the object must be obligatorily dropped. Observe the contrast between (1) and (3), showing that the presence of an overt direct object, even indefinite, makes the sentence ungrammatical.

- (3) *Mə te magnatə na/la tortə
 to=me.DAT holds.3SG.PRES eaten.PP.SG a/the cake
 ‘I feel like eating a cake’

The presence of a participle is therefore not to be interpreted as a sign of inner aspectual telicity.

Use of the participle. The use of the participle, and is probably a residual of a want-passive construction, of the sort described by Ledgeway (2009) for Neapolitan (*I want it sent*, meaning *I want to send it*). Also in the case of Neapolitan want passives, a past participle is used to express a wish, something yet to happen, and certainly not a completed event.

That the embedded event is atelic can be shown through the *in-an-hour/for-an-hour* test (Dowty 1991); the test confirms the atelicity of the event:

- (5) a. Jè n’ore chi me te magnate
 is one-hour that me holds eaten
 ‘I have been feeling like eating for an hour/it’s been an hour that I’ve felt like eating’
 b. *Me te magnate gnè n’ore
 me holds eaten with one hour
 ‘I have needed to eat in an hour/within an hour’

Perfectivity. The use of the participle is to be attributed, we believe, to a need to convey a necessity interpretation. Like for want-passive constructions, a formal mismatch is found between perfectivity in the embedded clause (conveyed by the use of the participle) and an imperfective root verb (*tenè*). Building on Giorgi & Pianesi (1997), we take that participial morphology carries a consequent state (CS) that makes the event lexicalised by the VP into a culminated one. In the periphrasis at issue, however, a mismatch arises between the culminated reading induced by the CS of the participle, and the imperfective in the matrix clause. This mismatch induces a necessity/need interpretation (something that needs to have happened, roughly).

Observe that changing the aspectual specification of the matrix verb makes the sentence ungrammatical:

- (6) *M’ a tenure magnate
 To-me has held-PRF eaten
 ‘I felt like eating’

It is very well possible to set a feel like periphrasis in the past, but only the imperfective can be used:

- (7) Me tenè magnate
 To-me held-IMPF eaten
 ‘I felt like eating’

We take this to show that the issue is not so much whether the state is past or present, but whether there is a mismatch between perfective and imperfective, creating the “need/wish” reading.