

## THE IMPERFECTIVE PARADOX IN A SECOND LANGUAGE

Stefano Rastelli – Università di Pavia

stefano.rastelli@unipv.it

The imperfective paradox (IP) surfaced by completion-entailment tests refers to the fact that the imperfective-progressive yields completion entailment when used with atelic predicates (e.g., *Livia is pushing the chair* → *Livia pushed the chair* = true) but not telic predicates (*Livia is peeling the tangerine* → *Livia peeled the tangerine* = false). The current study questions whether L2 learners too – like adult native speakers – are sensitive to the IP. Ninety-nine adult L2 Italian learners with different L1s (Slavic, Spanish and Chinese) and proficiency levels (A2-C1 of the Common European Framework) underwent a novel version of the completion judgment task based on event sub-intervals. In this version, learners were asked not *if* imperfective and perfective events in a video clip was completed but *when*. Statistical analysis of reaction times within and across phase-clicks with Multinomial Logistic Regression showed that beginner and intermediate L2 learners – unlike native speakers – did not differentiate the patterns of completion between perfective and imperfective predicates and between telic and atelic predicates. In order to explain such results, it is proposed that at initial developmental stages such aspectual oppositions might be still underspecified. In particular, at such stages L2 learners could not distinguish between telic and atelic L2 predicates – as it is predicted by the Aspect Hypothesis – because the category of Lexical Aspect too is in reconstruction.