

Event Semantics 2019

1.+2.November 2019

Institut für Slavistik, HU Berlin
Dorotheenstraße 65, Raum 5.57

Freitag, 1.Nov. 2019			
10.00	Martin Schäfer	Syntactic options and interpretational variety	Schaefer
11.00	Curt Anderson	Mental state adjectives and inference to mental states	Anderson
12.00	Claudia Maienborn	Wie tanzt Olga, die schöne Tänzerin?	Maienborn
13.00	Lunch		
14.30	Katie Fraser	An event-semantic analysis of the <i>swarm</i> alternation	FraserHole
15.30	Sven Kotowski	<i>Out</i> -prefixed verbs in English: evidence against one polysemous affix	Kotowski
16.30	Fabienne Martin	Pancake event semantics	
19.30	Dinner		
Samstag, 2.Nov 2019			
10.00	Sebastian Bücking	Narration without narrating	Bücking
11.00	Sebastian Löbner	Reflections of cascade formation in action verb semantics and grammar	Löbner
12.00	Henk Zeevat	Notional Events and Belief	Zeevat
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Curt Anderson (Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf)

Mental state adjectives and inference to mental states

In this talk I look at the semantics of mental state adjectives as attributive modifiers, especially cases such as those in (1), where the mental state adjective modifies a noun describing bodily gestures. These adjectives do not directly predicate of the referent of the noun *per se* (a smile itself cannot be sad) but rather make attributions regarding an associated mental event or state. This mental state is connected to the event creating the gesture, but is not necessarily a cause of the gesture itself.

- (1) a. a sad smile
- b. a friendly wave
- c. an angry gesture

Intuitively, these emotive properties can be read off of the nominal; *A _sad smile_*, for instance, has visual properties that identify the bearer of the smile as being sad. This intuition is borne out by embedding these DPs under verbs of perception, showing that the properties are directly perceivable (see the contrast between (2a) and (2b)).

- (2) a. I saw her make an angry gesture.
- b. ??I saw her make a noisy gesture (because her bracelets rattled when her hand moved).

I look closer at the causal relationship between the bodily gesture and the mental state. Additionally, in analyzing the contribution of the adjective, I draw a connection between mental state adjectives and complements of indirect perception, as in *_John saw that Mary left_*. Indirect perception complements entail (i) the existence of an event that (ii) is not directly perceived but merely inferred by the perceiver. The mental state adjectives in (1) exhibit these same properties, suggesting the existence of general strategies for inferring unseen events across grammatical constructions.

Sebastian Bücking

Narration without narrating

Narrative discourse structures in literary texts can typically be distinguished by whether they suggest the fiction of a narrator or not. For instance, the opening passage of the short story in (1) suggests that a narrating situation with a narrator exists, whereas the one in (2) does not.

- (1) Ich muß immer an diesen roten Teufel von einer Katze denken, und ich weiß nicht, ob das richtig war, was ich getan hab. Es hat damit angefangen, daß ich auf dem Steinhaufen neben dem Bombentrichter in unserem Garten saß ... (Rinser, *Die rote Katze*)

‘I always have to think of this red devil of a cat, and I don’t know whether it was right what I did. It all started with me sitting on a pile of stones next to the bomb crater in our garden ...’

- (2) Plötzlich wachte sie auf. Es war halb drei. Sie überlegte, warum sie aufgewacht war. Ach so! In der Küche hatte jemand gegen einen Stuhl gestoßen. Sie horchte nach der Küche. Es war still. Es war zu still und ... (Borchert, *Das Brot*)

‘Suddenly she woke up. It was half past two. She was thinking about why she had woken up. Oh well! In the kitchen someone had hit a chair. She was listening for the kitchen. It was silent. It was too silent and ...’

From a linguistic perspective, Eckardt (2015) proposes that the impression of not having a narrator in a narration simply follows from the narration not providing much information about the narrator; that is, a narrator is always present, but readers lack sufficient knowledge about it. In my talk, I will recap Eckardt’s proposal and its motivation, raise potential problems, and provide an outlook for an alternative analysis in terms of Maier’s (2017) Attitude Description Theory. Particular attention will be paid to the controversial question of how to interpret past tense in German narrative discourse. I will thereby relate the discussion of narrating situations to Hamburger’s (1994) famous hypothesis that German grammar provides an atemporal epic preterit.

Eckardt, Regine. 2015. Speakers and narrators. In Dorothee Birke & Tilmann Köppe (eds.), *Author and narrator: Transdisciplinary contributions to a narratological debate*, 153–186. Berlin: de Gruyter.

Maier, Emar. 2017. Fictional names in psychologistic semantics. *Theoretical Linguistics* 43. 1–45.

Hamburger, Käte. 1994. Die Logik der Dichtung. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta. 4. Aufl.

Short stories cited from Bellmann, Werner (ed.). 2003. *Klassische deutsche Kurzgeschichten*. Reclam: Stuttgart.

Katherine Fraser, Daniel Hole

An event-semantic analysis of the *swarm* alternation

In this talk, we provide the first explicit syntax and semantics of the non-base alternant of the *swarm* alternation as in *The garden is swarming with bees*. We identify locatum and event abundance as well as imperfectivization as entailed components of meaning. At the not-at-issue level we single out the C-level categories of scalar evaluation and mirativity as contributing to the complex semantics of the non-base alternant. Towards the end, we propose a syntax and semantics that implements all of these ingredients.

Sven Kotowski

Out-prefixed verbs in English: evidence against one polysemous affix

Polysemy constitutes a core problem of derivational semantics, giving rise to the question of how to best analyze the relationship between similar output forms. English verbs prefixed with *out-* come in at least two guises, locative (e.g. *outsource*, *out-migrate*) and scalar-comparative (e.g. *outrun*, *outsmart*). Although several accounts in the literature assume some form of PATH=SCALE-metaphor to underlie the relationship between these constructions, they are both under-researched and ill-understood—with locative *out-* being downright neglected. Based on a data set of more than 1,000 tokens, I show fundamental differences between the two prefix uses to clearly outweigh their commonalities, arguing for two distinct morphological processes rather than one polysemous, highly underspecified affix. Being at least weakly resultative, both constructions are shown to add sub-event(s) to their base forms, while differences concern the syntactic frames and alternations they occur in, stress assignment, promiscuity regarding allowed base classes, and the number of sub-events the respective constructions add. Generalizing over the data, I formalize this behavior via distinct lexeme-formation rules for different senses of *out-* in (Düsseldorf) frame semantics.

Sebastian Löbner

Reflections of cascade formation in action verb semantics and grammar

„Cascades“ in the sense of Löbner (in print), based on Goldman’s (1970) theory of level-generation, are a model of coherent multi-level simultaneous categorization of action. Human doings, by ourselves or others, are not just simple events, but are usually categorized as constituting in one a “cascade” of a multitude of action types. I want to venture the following Cascade Hypothesis: “The human brain inevitably attempts to categorize human doings in coherent cascades of action types realized in one.” If the hypothesis indeed applies, it is to be expected that cascade formation is reflected in language, in particular in the meanings and constructions of action verbs.

Evidence will be presented that reflects cascade formation that is either explicit in certain patterns of word formation or implicit in well-known semantic subclasses of action verbs. The examples presented are taken from Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, Lakhota, English, and German. They illustrate where higher cascade formation takes us: to achieving results, to actions of a particular evaluation (such as ‘forbidden’ or ‘pleasant’), and to social interaction.

Claudia Maienborn

Wie tanzt Olga, die schöne Tänzerin?

Seit Larson (1998) gilt es als ausgemacht, dass Attribute bei komplexen Nomen auf eingebettete verbale Nicht-Köpfe zugreifen können und so gleichsam adverbial interpretiert werden. Die NP *schöne Tänzerin* erhält auf diese Weise die ereignisbezogene Interpretation 'Frau, die schön tanzt'. Es gibt verschiedene technische Umsetzungen und Weiterentwicklungen des Larson-Vorschlags. Sie alle laufen darauf hinaus, dass sie beim Nomen ansetzen – Larson spricht von „N-Analyse“, und dass sie eine kompositionale Lösung vorsehen, die allerdings auf zusätzliche Eingriffe in die Syntax-Semantik-Schnittstelle angewiesen ist. Ich werde Argumente gegen Larsons Ansatz vorbringen und als Alternative eine „A-Analyse“ vorschlagen, bei der das Adjektiv und das (komplexe) Nomen klassisch kompositionally via Prädikatmodifikation verknüpft werden. Ein möglicher Ereignisbezug ergibt sich im Zuge pragmatischer Spezifizierung.

Martin Schäfer

Syntactic options and interpretational variety

Typically, cognate lexemes can be used in attributive and adverbial modification, and as predicative complements, cf. (1).

- (1) a. The quick/wise response.
- b. The children responded quickly/wisely.
- c. The children were quick/wise (to respond).

However, adverbial modification affords much more choice with regard to the syntactic integration of the lexeme, and this choice has been linked to different interpretations (cf. e.g. Ernst 2002). My talk is concerned with what the, in contrast, restricted choice means for eventive readings of nominal modifiers and predicative complements: are they more restricted, because they cannot exploit any structural patterns, or are they simply underspecified and allow for the same range of interpretations as their adverbial counterparts?

I show that the answers to these questions are far from straightforward, but that in general neither the attributive nor the predicative constructions reach the full interpretational variety possible in adverbial modification. Instead, we find that attributive interpretations sometimes exploit near-synonyms to go with different eventive readings (quick walk vs. fast walk: holistic vs. rate of speed interpretations), and the *to*-predicative construction tends to specialize for one specific interpretation, typically closest to high readings of the corresponding adverbial modifiers.

Henk Zeevat

Notional Events and Belief

If events are the objects that realize sentences built from action and event verbs, somebody who judges such a sentence to be true is somebody who has a concept of events as instantiated. If the concept is guaranteed to have at most one instance, the concept can be called a notional event.

If the subject believes it to be instantiated, the concept is also an object of belief of the subject. As a conceptual entity, the fact that whatever would fulfill the notional event realizes sentences of the right type depends only on the conceptual content of the notional event and on the semantic structure of the sentence and can be understood as an entailment: the notional event E entails S. To believe in S is to believe that some object e realizes S. E is the concept of e and x is committed to E iff x believes that E is instantiated by some object e.