

The profile of event delimitation

Convenors

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Description

Events, as opposed to states, are largely accepted as linguistic individuals across theories and frames, although the ways in which they are defined and identified in linguistics and in philosophy is still under debate. In this workshop, we address the issue of the individuation of events by considering the strategies that are exploited across languages for delimiting single occurrences. We propose to use the notion of event delimitation as a semantically grounded notion that can serve two purposes. It can contribute to developing a principle of event individuation, and it offers a working hypothesis for gaining insights on a collection of linguistic expressions and morpho-phono-syntactic devices that may otherwise look motely.

In the linguistic literature, the issue of event delimitation has been tackled by studies that appeal to aspectual notions, to temporal notions, and has also surfaced, among others, in syntactic discussions, for instance on valence alternation and case marking. A first aspectual notion that is relevant is that of telicity. Several options have been explored in the literature to characterise the events that are endowed with such a form of delimitedness. Telicity has been expressed in temporal terms within the Vendlerian tradition, or by exploiting mereological structures—cf. Bach (1986), Krifka (1989, 1998) —or by making reference to the internal structure of the event—for instance by decomposing events into conceptual components, e.g. Travis (2000), Ramchand (2008). In empirical terms, telicity is a property of a subset of verbal predicates that can be attributed to verbal stems, as well as to verbs taken together with the argument structure lexically or structurally associated with them, cf. the rich production focussing on the internal argument and its thematic relation, and on resultative complements. Another well-established notion relevant for talking about delimitation is that of perfectivity. Perfectivity is a matter of viewpoint projected on the event, and as such it is independent from the intrinsic properties of the event, strictly speaking. It brings about delimitedness by making the endpoint accessible. In empirical terms, perfective aspect is mainly expressed by inflexional and derivational morphology, e.g. aspectual prefixes, and is syntactically represented as the domain of higher aspect. Aspect, complementation and tense morphemes/adverbs appear to be extremely important ingredients. The existing wealth of work provides the empirical and theoretical background on which to rely.

The workshop aims at contributing to the debate about linguistic expressions and semantico-morpho-phono-syntactic devices for delimiting events, by focusing on expressions and constructions specifically in their use for delimiting occurrences of events.

The workshop is open to different theoretical frameworks, and the authors are expected to provide minimal relevant background. We invite contributions that enrich the empirical coverage and/or provide theoretical analyses of the topic by addressing (but are not limited to) the following phenomena:

- Modification and complementation by non-canonical complements:
 - o cognate objects,
 - o complements with not well-defined categorial status such as so-called reduplicated verbs in Sinitic languages,
 - o measure phrases (either indefinite NPs or PPs such as English *two hours/for two hours*), so-called verb-copy in Mandarin Chinese;
- Complex predicate constructions:
 - o light-verb constructions (*have/take a walk*),
 - o aspectual properties of serial verbs,
 - o periphrastic aspectual constructions;
- Event nominalisations:
 - o derived and underived event nouns in their eventive reading,
 - o *nomen vicis* and *ism l-marra*, their use and their morphological makeup;
- Numeral verbal classifiers;
- Temporal structure: complex tenses and temporal periphrases that exploit temporal reference for delimiting occurrences of events (decessive/discontinuous past).

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