Workshop proposal for Chronos 11 in Pisa, SNS, 16-18 June 2014

Agent control over non-culminating events

In many languages from typologically unrelated families such as Mandarin (Koenig & Chief 2008), Thai (Koenig & Muansuwan 2000), Korean (Park 1993, van Valin 2005), Skwxwúmesh, St'at'imcets, or Saanich Straits Salish (Bar-el 2005, Bar-el et al. 2005, Kiyota 2008, Jacobs 2011), Tagalog (Dell 1983), Japanese (Ikegami 1985), Hindi (Singh 1998, Altshuler 2013), Tamil (Pederson 2008), Russian, Karachay-Balkar, Mari and Bagwalal (Tatevosov & Ivanov 2009), Adyghe (Arkadiev & Letuchiy 2009), sentences with perfective accomplishments can be used to describe partial, incomplete or unsuccessful events. On this construal, perfective accomplishments do not give rise to culmination entailments. It is thus possible to deny the culmination of the event whose occurrence is asserted without generating a contradiction (e.g. to assert *Mary killed him but he didn't die.).* A similar phenomenon has been observed for our more familiar Romance and Germanic languages, albeit for a very restricted set of verbs only, such as double object verbs (Oehrle 1976, Gropen et al. 1989, Beavers 2010, cf. *Mary explained the problem to him, and nevertheless he didn't understand it*).

This workshop explores a correlation, gone to a large extent unnoticed in the literature, between the availability of non-culminating construals for accomplishments and the control of the agent over the described event. The generalization put forth, which we call the *Agent Control Hypothesis* (ACH), is that nonculminating readings of accomplishment predicates require the predicate's external argument to be associated with "agenthood" properties.

Evidence for the ACH is provided by Salish languages, as discussed by Bar-el et al. 2005, Kiyota 2008, or Jacobs 2011: while so called 'control' perfective transitives do not give rise to culmination entailments, non-control/causatives (Saanich, St'at'imcets) or limited control (Skwxwúmesh) entail culmination.

Moreover, for around fifty French and German verbs, Martin & Schäfer 2012 & 2013 observe that when we replace the agent subject in (1) with a (pure) causer as in (2), the non-culminating reading disappears:

(1) Marie lui expliqua le problème, et pourtant il ne le comprit pas.   (agent subject)
     'Marie explained the problem to him, and nevertheless he didn't understand it.'
(2) Ce résultat lui expliqua le problème de l'analyse, # pourtant il ne le comprit pas.   (causer subject)
     'This result made him understand the problem of the analysis, and nevertheless he didn't understand it.'

The ACH is also supported by the observation that in many languages from unrelated families, completive markers can also be used to indicate that the action is performed non-intentionally/inadvertently (Fauconnier 2011, 2012). Another piece of evidence is provided by the correlation argued for in Germanic languages between the licensing of causer subjects and the 'resultativity' of the verbal predicate (Folli & Harley 2005, Travis 2005, Schäfer 2012): while causers are generally fine with bi-eventive verbs, they are claimed to be acceptable as subjects of mono-eventive verbs only if these are augmented with a resultative phrase.

The outstanding question, however, is defining the relevant notion of (agent) control (see Jacobs for critical discussion of this issue in Skwxwúmesh). *What properties of being an agent are relevant for canceling culmination entailments*? Should we discriminate, for instance, agent-like instruments from causer-like instruments and, furthermore, among causers, between natural forces, events/states, or non-acting humans?

The workshop welcomes papers putting to test, on empirical, theoretical or experimental grounds, the Agent Control Hypothesis, as well as papers on related issues raised by non-culminating accomplishments:

- To what extent does the ACH hold cross-linguistically and, if so, what are the properties of agenthood relevant for cancelling culmination inferences?
- How do the analyses that have been proposed for non-culminating construals (e.g. modal, aspectual, scalar accounts) fare in accounting for the ACH?
- Does the ACH hold for the various subtypes of non-culminating readings distinguished so far in the literature (e.g. 'failed attempt' vs. 'partial success', Tatevosov & Ivanov 2009)? What are the different ways in which culmination can be cancelled, across predicate types and languages? To what extent is the typology of non-culminating readings relevant for the ACH?

- How is the typology of predicates that allow non-culminating readings across languages characterized? Which verbs allow/exclude/favour a given non-culminating reading? How can we account for variation across languages or speakers?
- How is the difference between the non-culminating and culminating readings of a verb reflected in morphosyntax, aspect, argument structure, event structure, information structure? What cross-linguistic generalizations emerge?
- Is there experimental evidence from child or adult languages to bear on the ACH? This question is all the more interesting since there is converging crosslinguistic evidence that children as old as 5 tend to construe inherently culminating verbs as non-culminating (van Hout 1998, 2008, Gropen et al. 1991, Wittek 2002, 2008), but virtually all studies on the acquisition of culmination entailments are exclusively based on sentences with agentive subjects (Hodgson 2006, 2010 being an exception).

Planned schedule
In addition to two talks by invited speakers (2x45 minutes), we plan to accept 4 submissions on the topics mentioned in the description (4x 30 minutes), and to have a selection of the workshop papers appear in a special volume.

Scientific committee
Daniel Altshuler (Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf)
Leora Bar-El (University of Montana)
Henry Davis (University of British Columbia)
Atle Grønn (Oslo University)
Peter Jacobs (University of Victoria)
Hans Kamp (University of Stuttgart)
Jean-Pierre Koenig (Buffalo University)
Oana Lungu (Université de Nantes)
Lisa Matthewson (University of British Columbia)
Christopher Piñón (Université de Lille 3)
Florian Schäfer (University of Stuttgart)
Sergei Tatevosov (Moscow State University)

Organizers
Hamida Demirdache is the head of the Linguistics Lab of the Université de Nantes (LLING). She has been working on the syntax–semantics and acquisition of tense, aspect and modality from a cross-linguistic perspective.
Fabienne Martin is a post-doc researcher in the Collaborative Research Center SFB 732 of Stuttgart University. She works on the interface between lexical semantics and tense, aspect and modality, with a focus on Romance languages.