

Psycholinguistic insights into the conceptual processes underlying the use of grammatical aspect

Goals

This workshop aims to bring together linguists, language typologists and psycholinguists who study the production, comprehension and acquisition of grammatical aspect, using psycholinguistic research tools and paradigms. We aim to show how empirical approaches may shed important new light on the language-specific semantic features and the principles of use of this core grammatical category. Despite legions of studies on aspect we still do not fully understand the specifics of individual aspectual systems, nor do we fully grasp the principles according to which aspectual categories are applied in context, and what they entail for the conceptualization and the processing of *events*. Controlled production or comprehension studies, in which perceptual or linguistic input is varied according to features potentially relevant for temporal perspective-taking, allow the investigation of factors that determine use of aspect markers, and how aspect contributes to the understanding of language used in context.

A relevant area of study for the impact of temporal-aspectual categories is the conceptualization of *motion events*. Motion events are particularly interesting in this respect since languages vary with respect to the types of temporal-aspectual and spatial categories they provide, and the conceptualization of a motion event involves the interaction of both types of concepts. Psycholinguistic methods, such as the registration of eye movements during verbal and nonverbal tasks cross-linguistically, may shed more light on, particularly, the online processing implications of aspect. This is something that linguistic analyses and corpus studies alone cannot provide.

We welcome contributions that relate to the following:

- empirical approaches to aspect in language use (production or comprehension), by native speakers or L2 users, with a specific focus on event construal
- studies showing how grammatical aspect influences people's representations or conceptualizations of reality, e.g., in the form of events,
- studies linking the results of empirical studies to theoretical questions related to the typology of aspect

The workshop will consist of presentations of empirical studies on aspect, using different methodologies and paradigms. Furthermore, we will have a specific discussion on language production paradigms used for shedding light on aspect systems and their theoretical account. The workshop will end with a general discussion of all presented papers, and anything that may come up, by experts working on aspect from a typological perspective, a semantic perspective, and from an expert on empirical research.

Structure

Talk 1: Introduction

Christiane von Steutterheim, Monique Flecken & Mary Carroll. Heidelberg University, Germany & Radboud University Nijmegen, the Netherlands.

Introduction to the workshop. Empirical data from the “seeing for speaking” paradigm: how grammatical aspect guides motion event perception – a focused analysis of aspect use in Arabic, in comparison to German.

Talk 2

Silvia Natale. University of Bern, Switzerland.

Progressive aspect in Italian: findings from a ‘developing’ aspect system.

Talk 3

Emanuel Bylund & Panos Athanasopoulos. University of Stockholm, Sweden & University of Reading, UK.

The effects of an L2 aspectual system on the L1: Endpoint encoding in Afrikaans L1 speakers with English as a L2.

Talk 4

Monique Flecken, Johannes Gerwien. Grammatical aspect influences event duration estimations – evidence from a novel paradigm.

Talk 5

Open to participants

Talk 6

Open to participants

Talk 7

Wolfgang Klein. Time-argument structures.

General discussion

Led by discussants who are experts on semantic, typological and empirical research on aspect (waiting for acceptance; names to be announced later).

Programme committee members

Christiane von Steutterheim

Monique Flecken

Mary Carroll

Wolfgang Klein

Organizers

Christiane von Stutterheim

Christiane von Stutterheim (PhD in Linguistics, Free University Berlin, Habilitation in Linguistics, University of Heidelberg) is full Professor at the University of Heidelberg. She is director of the Linguistics Department at the Institute of German as a Foreign Philology. In 2011 she was awarded a one year Research Fellowship at the Lichtenberg Kolleg, Göttingen. Her research interests cover psycholinguistics, particularly cross linguistic aspects of language production, cognition of space and time and second language acquisition under a typological perspective. Over the last years she has directed a number of interdisciplinary cross-linguistic research projects, funded by the German Science Foundation and by different private foundations.

Monique Flecken

Monique Flecken studied English language and culture (specialization: linguistics) at Radboud University in Nijmegen (graduated 2006). She obtained her PhD in psycholinguistics, focusing on event conceptualization and use of aspect in early bilinguals, from the University of Heidelberg & Radboud University in 2010 (supervisors: Prof. C. von Stutterheim, Prof. P. Muysken). After that she replaced the assistant professor at the dept. of German as a foreign language philology (IDF) in Heidelberg, for a year. In 2011, she received a Veni-grant from the NWO (Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research). Currently, she is carrying out her postdoctoral Veni project at the Donders Centre for Cognition, Radboud University Nijmegen, in the Multilingualism research group of Prof. Ton Dijkstra.