Lectures on events and event plurality

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These lectures will introduce the notion of event and of event plurality, in particular with respect to the issue of aspectual modification. The first two lectures will be devoted to the discussion of previous approaches and solutions, both in the linguistic and philosophical literature. Building on this discussion, the third lecture will present new empirical data and the possible generalizations that can be drawn at present stage of research.

1 Events and the ontology of the event domain.

This lecture is devoted to the introduction of the ontology of the domain of events. We will address the preliminary question ‘what is an event?’ and look at the main influential answers in the linguistic. We will also discuss the type of individuals we may need in the ontology: singular events, plural events and groups of events vs. situations.

Selected references:
Bach (1986); Casati and Varzi (2007); Cusic (1981); Ferreira (2005); Landman (1991); Kratzer (2005); Pianesi and Varzi (2004); Verkuyl (2000); Copley and Harley (2012); Tovena (2012).

2 Event and verbal plurality

We will discuss the notion of verbal vs. event plurality.
(i) Verbal plurality is the plurality of events that is obtained by modification of the verbal head. Across languages, verbal plurality is obtained with the use of different verbal markers, including pluralactional markers (often compared to Number morphemes in the verbal domain), aspectual morphemes (perfective or imperfective) and other verbal markers, like iterative or frequentative morphemes. In this lecture, we will take a quick look at a range of verbal plurality markers cross-linguistically.
(ii) Event plurality is a semantic notion that has been developed to account for distributive phenomena and aspectual modification. In this lecture, we will concentrate on the notion of event plurality exploited in the literature on lexical aspect.

Selected references:
Cabredo-Hoffherr and Laca (ta); Lasersohn (1995); Muller and Sanchez-Mendes (2008); Tovena and Kihm (2008); Landman (2008); Landman and Rothstein (2011); Rothstein (2008)
3 Counting and measuring events

It has been argued that iterative modifiers like *n times* in English are not nominal phrases but rather classifier phrases of events; on the other hand, indefinite nominal phrases in English, when used with light verbs (*take a nap, give a cleaning*), may also be used for the purpose of singling out an event. We will try to draw a picture of verbal classifiers by comparing English and Romance with Chinese, a language that possess a grammatical category of verbal classifiers with non-homogeneous semantic properties.

Selected references:
Acquaviva (2005); Landman (2006); Paris (2011); Donazzan (2013)

References


