

MA course, spring 2019-2020

The relation of verbal atoms to sentence structure

We explore one theory of the lexical representation of argument and aspectual information and see how it compares to other theories in predicting the range and types of structures/constructions found in a language.

Background assumed

Students are expected to be familiar with aspectual classification and diagnostics and the relation between aspectual function and syntactic position:

Vendler, Zeno. 1967. Verbs and Times. Chapter 4 of *Linguistics in Philosophy*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.

(Review at least pages 97-107/21-26.)

Dowty, David R. 1979. *Word Meaning and Montague Grammar*. Dordrecht: Reidel. (Chapter 2: The Semantics of Aspectual Classes of Verbs in English.)

(Review at least pages 51-70; 88-90.)

Tenny, Carol L. 1989. The Aspectual interface hypothesis. *Lexicon Project Working Papers 31: Studies in Generative Approaches to Aspect*. M.I.T.

(Review at least pages 1-11.)

Requirements (The percentages may change slightly, depending on student numbers)

(1) Critical article responses – written	20%
(2) Article presentations – oral	15%
(3) Final course paper:	
a. Proposal/abstract	5%
b. Annotated bibliography	5%
c. Class presentation (+handout)	20%
d. Written paper	35%

Notes: Late assignments or presentations will receive a grade of zero.

Part of the grade for (2) and (3)c will be based on participation/attendance at your colleagues' presentations.

The course consists of readings and discussion. Students are expected to prepare the readings for each class, present when scheduled, and to actively participate in class discussion. Attendance is therefore required. (No more than three absences allowed.)

Each student will write critical responses to several articles.

Each student will choose a topic, collect relevant data in their native language, and compile a list of relevant references. The result, together with observations and the outline/directions of an analysis, will be presented in class, accompanied by a professional-level handout (or presentation).

Based on the presentation and the comments made by your colleagues, each student will write a final paper (approximately 15 double-spaced pages), making use of the theoretical tools assembled during the semester.

Partial Bibliography

[for an introduction to certain alternations and the idea of the LCS:]

Hale, Kenneth and Samuel J. Keyser. 1986. Some transitivity alternations in English. *Lexicon Project Working Papers 7*. Center for Cognitive Science, MIT, Cambridge, Mass., and *Anuario del Seminario de Filología Vasca "Julio de Urquijo"* ASJU XX-3. pp. 605-638. Donostia-San Sebastian.

[for an introduction to meaning components and their role in the syntactic representation of argument and aspectual information:]

Hale, Kenneth and Samuel J. Keyser. 1993. On Argument structure and the lexical expression of syntactic relations. In K. Hale and S.J. Keyser (eds.), *The View from Building 20: Essays in Linguistics in Honor of Sylvain Bromberger*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

[for an introduction to Atom Theory, the projection of syntax from meaning components:]

Erteschik-Shir, Nomi and Tova Rapoport. 2005. Path Predicates. In N. Erteschik-Shir and T. Rapoport (eds.), *The Syntax of Aspect: Deriving Thematic and Aspectual Interpretation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 65-86.

Erteschik-Shir and Rapoport. 2010. Contact and other results. In M. Rappaport-Hovav, E. Doron and I. Sichel (eds.), *Lexical Semantics, Syntax, and Event Structure*. Oxford University Press, Oxford. 59-75

[on denominal verbs:]

Harley, Heidi. 2005. How do verbs get their names? Denominal verbs, Manner incorporation and the ontology of verb roots in English. In N. Erteschik-Shir and T. Rapoport (eds.), *The Syntax of Aspect: Deriving Thematic and Aspectual Interpretation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 42-64.

Kiparsky, Paul. 1997. Remarks on denominal verbs. In A. Alsina, J. Bresnan and P. Sells (eds.), *Complex Predicates*. Palo Alto, CA: CSLI Publications. 473-499.

[on the four alternants of the locative alternation:]

Segal, Zehavit. 2019. *Placing and Detaching: The Different Directions of the Locative Alternation*. PhD dissertation. Ben-Gurion University of the Negev.

Some of the topics we will be examining (order and selection depends, in part, on class choice):

Transitivity alternations – constrained by verb class
Word order in Arabic and Hebrew – the relation to verb class
The conative and object drop—defocussing Result
Result adverbs – defocussing Manner
Denominal verbs
The locative alternation and stativity