

Lexical Event Structures for Verb Semantics

Stefan Engelberg
[University of Wuppertal](#), Germany

[View MS Word Version](#)

Abstract

The paper introduces a theory of Lexical Event Structures as a means to represent the meaning of verbs. The theory is guided by the assumption that verbs refer to events that are internally structured in the sense that they consist of several subevents and states. The temporal properties and relations of these have to be specified. The occurrence of subevents is either implied or presupposed by the verb, and event participants are related to some, but not necessarily all subevents by semantic relations.

Lexical Event Structure Theory supports explanations in five domains of phenomena, namely semantics-syntax mapping, grammatical-categorial restrictions, inference behavior, selectional restrictions, and interlexematic relations like hyponymy. A wide variety of phenomena from all of these domains are extensively discussed in the paper.

Furthermore, the empirical adequacy of this, as well as any a lexical semantic theory hinges not only on a broad domain of phenomena but also on a precise characterization of the concepts the theory makes use of. Thus, it is shown how logical approaches on the one hand and cognitive ones on the other help to sharpen our understanding of event-internal temporal properties and relations.

About the Author

Dr Engelberg teaches at the University of Wuppertal, Germany.

Personal Homepage: <http://www.uni-wuppertal.de/FB4/personen/engelberg/welcome.html>

Email: engelb@uni-wuppertal.de