

## 24.979 Topics in Semantics

### “The Morphosemantics of Tense, Mood, and Aspect”

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Day & Time:	Mondays, 2:05 – 4:55 (with a 15 minute break in the middle)
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In this seminar, we will explore the morphosemantics of the verbal system, in particular the categories of Tense, Mood, and Aspect.

Two general issues will guide our discussion:

(i) There are many suggested and suggestive parallels between the verbal and nominal domains. For example, people often apply the definite/indefinite distinction to various verbal phenomena, e.g. the subjunctive is a marker of “indefinite clauses” and factive complements are (like) definites.. Whatever that means. What we will try to do is illuminate to what extent such parallels are fruitful to pursue.

(ii) Often, there are indications that certain morphemes are not themselves semantically active but are mere “agreement” reflexes dependent on other elements. For example, one could see (at least some occurrences of) the past tense morpheme not as introducing a past operator but as reflecting the fact that somewhere higher up in the structure there is a real past operator (perhaps, a past tense adverbial).

We will not be able to survey the entire field, of course. What we will do is to examine a few topics that are of particular interest to us and we will attempt to combine this with enough background material to give students a foundation from which to pursue their own interests. Our time this semester will be particularly constrained since we only have 11 class meetings. Let’s try to make the best possible use of this time.

### Synergies

Students attending this class should also try to attend the seminar on TMA Syntax offered this semester by David and Sabine. We have not matched the syllabi, but there will be lots of interesting overlaps and opportunities to compare and contrast. This is intentional.

## Course Requirements

1. Approximately halfway through the semester, students submit a squib. The squib has to present a critical evaluation/exploration of a particular aspect of one of the two general hypotheses listed above, drawing on a subset of the relevant papers or on a data set that you have found yourself.
2. The last session of the seminar is devoted to student presentations. Students will give short talks about a topic of relevance to the course. This can be related to the squib, but if so, there must<sub>epistemic/deontic</sub> have been some further substantial development since the squib was submitted.

## Tentative Syllabus

<b>1</b>	<i>September 10: Introduction</i> Basic architectural questions. Instants vs. intervals. Tense as operator vs. tense as referential item. Time arguments vs. evaluation parameter. Events?
	[September 17 is a “Student Holiday” – no classes!]
<b>2</b>	<i>September 24: The Perfect (Iatridou et.al. 2001)</i>
<b>3</b>	<i>October 1: “Simultaneous Readings” (Musan 2001, von Stechow &amp; Iatridou 2001)</i> Presenting the material we’ll be talking about at “Sinn und Bedeutung”.
	[October 8 is Columbus Day – no classes!]
<b>4</b>	<i>October 15: Tense/Aspect/Adverbials (von Stechow 2001 et.al.)</i>
<b>5</b>	<i>October 22: Aspect – Perfective/Imperfective</i>
<b>6</b>	<i>October 29: Aspect/Aktionsart – (Im)perfectivity vs. (A)telicity</i>
<b>7</b>	<i>November 5: Mood and Complementation</i>
	[November 12 is Veterans Day – no classes!]
<b>8</b>	<i>November 19: Mood – Subjunctive Conditionals</i>
<b>9</b>	<i>November 26: Mood – Subjunctive Complements</i>
<b>10</b>	<i>December 3: Factive Complements</i>
<b>11</b>	<i>December 10: Student Presentations</i>

## Some Relevant Literature

We will assign particular readings for particular meetings as we go along. For now, here is an alphabetical list of some of the works we will draw on, with an emphasis on more recent work or extremely important older work. Many more references to come, but you can also get going by following up on the stuff cited in these works.

- Adger, David, and Quer, Josep. 2001. The Syntax and Semantics of Unselected Embedded Questions. *Language* 77:107-133.
- Bach, Emmon. 1986. The Algebra of Events. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 9:5-16.
- Baker, Mark, and Travis, Lisa. 1997. Mood as Verbal Definiteness in a Tenseless Language. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 5:213-269.
- Beghelli, Filippo. 1998. Mood and the Interpretation of Indefinites. *The Linguistic Review* 15:277-300.
- Bertinetto, Pier Marco. 2001. On a Frequent Misunderstanding in the Temporal-Aspectual Domain: The 'Perfective - Telic Confusion'. In *Semantic Interfaces: Reference, Anaphora and Aspect*, ed. Maria Teresa Guasti, 177-210. Stanford, CA: CSLI.
- Brugger, Gerhard, and D'Angelo, Mario. 1995. Movement at LF Triggered by Mood and Tense. *Folia Linguistica* 29:195-221.
- Depraetere, Ilse. 1995. On the Necessity of Distinguishing Between (Un)boundedness and (A)telicity. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 18:1-19.
- Dowty, David. 1982. Tenses, Time Adverbs, and Compositional Semantic Theory. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 5:23-55.
- Farkas, Donka. 1982. *Intensionality and Romance Subjunctive Relatives*. Bloomington: Indiana University Linguistics Club.
- Farkas, Donka. 1992. On the Semantics of Subjunctive Complements. In *Romance Languages and Modern Linguistic Theory*, ed. K. Koerner, 69-104. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Farkas, Donka. 1999. The Semantics of Complementation: Belief vs. Want. Ms.
- Giorgi, Alessandra, and Pianesi, Fabio. 1997. *Tense and Aspect: From Semantics to Morphosyntax*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Giorgi, Alessandra, and Pianesi, Fabio. 2001a. Ways of Terminating. In *Semantic Interfaces: Reference, Anaphora and Aspect*, ed. Maria Teresa Guasti, 211-277. Stanford, CA: CSLI.

- Giorgi, Alessandra, and Pianesi, Fabio. 2001b. *Imperfect Dreams*: The Temporal Dependencies of Fictional Predicates. *Probus* 13:31-68.
- Heim, Irene. 1992. Presupposition Projection and the Semantics of Attitude Verbs. *Journal of Semantics* 9:183-221.
- Higginbotham, James. 1985. On Semantics. *Linguistic Inquiry* 16:547-593.
- Higginbotham, James, Pianesi, Fabio, and Varzi, Achille C. eds. 2000. *Speaking of Events*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Higginbotham, Jim. 1983. The Logic of Perceptual Reports: An Extensional Alternative to Situation Semantics. *Journal of Philosophy* 80:100-127.
- Iatridou, Sabine. 2000. The Grammatical Ingredients of Counterfactuality. *Linguistic Inquiry* 31:231-270.
- Iatridou, Sabine, Anagnostopoulou, Elena, and Izvorski, Roumyana. 2001. Observations about the Form and Meaning of the Perfect. In *Ken Hale: A Life in Language*, ed. Michael Kenstowicz, 189-238. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Ippolito, Michela. 2001a. Presuppositions and Implicatures in Counterfactuals. Ms.
- Ippolito, Michela. 2001b. The Imperfect and Modality. In *Proceedings of the International Workshop on Tense and Aspect*, ed. J. Lecarme.
- Kratzer, Angelika. 1981. The Notional Category of Modality. In *Words, Worlds, and Contexts. New Approaches in Word Semantics*, eds. H.J. Eikmeyer and H. Rieser, 38-74. Berlin: de Gruyter.
- Kratzer, Angelika. 1986. Conditionals. *Chicago Linguistics Society* 22:1-15.
- Kratzer, Angelika. 1991. Modality. In *Semantik: Ein internationales Handbuch der zeitgenössischen Forschung*, eds. Arnim von Stechow and Dieter Wunderlich, 639-650. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- Kratzer, Angelika. 1998. More Structural Analogies Between Pronouns and Tenses. *SALT* 8.
- Krifka, Manfred. 1998. The Origins of Telicity. In *Events and Grammar*, ed. Susan Rothstein. Dordrecht: Kluwer.
- Musan, Renate. 2001. The Present Perfect in German: Outline of Its Semantic Composition. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 19:355-401.
- Partee, Barbara. 1973. Some Structural Analogies Between Tenses and Pronouns in English. *The Journal of Philosophy* 70:601-609.

- Partee, Barbara. 2000. Some Remarks on Linguistic Uses of the Notion of "Event". In *Events as Grammatical Objects: The Converging Perspectives of Lexical Semantics and Syntax*, eds. Carol Tenny and James Pustejovsky, 483-495. Stanford, CA: CSLI.
- Portner, Paul. 1997. The Semantics of Mood, Complementation, and Conversational Force. *Natural Language Semantics* 5:167-212.
- Portner, Paul. 1999. The Semantics of Mood. *GLOT International* 4:3-8.
- Portner, Paul. 2000. The (Temporal) Semantics and (Modal) Pragmatics of the Perfect. Ms.
- Quer, Josep. 2001. Interpreting Mood. *Probus* 13:81-111.
- Singh, M. 1998. On the Semantics of the Perfective Aspect. *Natural Language Semantics* 6:171-199.
- Tenny, Carol, and Pustejovsky, James eds. 2000. *Events as Grammatical Objects: The Converging Perspectives of Lexical Semantics and Syntax*. Stanford, CA: CSLI.
- Tsoulas, George. 1995. Indefinite Clauses: Some Notes on the Syntax and Semantics of Subjunctives and Infinitives. *West Coast Conference on Formal Linguistics* 13:515-530.
- Villalta, Elisabeth. 2000. Propositional Attitudes and Mood Selection in Spanish. Ms.
- von Stechow, Kai. 1998. The Presupposition of Subjunctive Conditionals. In *The Interpretive Tract*, eds. Uli Sauerland and Orin Percus, 29-44. Cambridge: MITWPL.
- von Stechow, Kai. 1999. NPI-Licensing, Strawson-Entailment, and Context-Dependency. *Journal of Semantics* 16:97-148.
- Zucchi, Sandro. 2001. Tense in Fiction. In *Semantic Interfaces: Reference, Anaphora and Aspect*, ed. Maria Teresa Guasti, 320-356. Stanford, CA: CSLI.