

AM2 — Syntax: theories and models

Reading Assignment #2

Preliminaries

Reading Wurmbrand, Susi. 2005. How complex are complex predicates? Ms., University of Connecticut, Storrs (download it from the course website; it is password-protected, so contact me if you don't know the password).

Instructions

- Answer all the questions in exercises #1 and #2 plus, quoting data and/or text from Wurmbrand (2005) as necessary. Answering the bonus exercise is optional, and will earn you extra credit only in case you provide appropriate answers for exercises #1 and #2.
- What this assignment is testing is your ability to extract relevant information from a complex technical text. You have to write as much as you think you need to answer the questions appropriately, but not more.
- You may write your answers in either English or German.
- Submit your answers no later than Monday, November 19 at 23:59.
- The answers must be submitted by email (vicente@uni-potsdam.de). The preferred submission formats are .pdf or .txt (no .doc or .docx files, please).

Clarifications

- Wurmbrand speaks Austrian German; therefore, some of the German judgements she provides occasionally sound funny to speakers of Standard/Northern German.
- One of the arguments in the paper revolves around the telic/atelic distinction. A telic predicate is a predicate that has a definite end point. For instance, *to drink a bottle of beer* is telic because the event of drinking finishes whenever one drinks all the beer in the bottle. Conversely, *to drink beer* is atelic because it doesn't specify an amount of beer such that, whenever you drink that much, the event of drinking is done. Note that in both cases we have the same verb, so we have to talk about (a)telic *predicates* rather than *verbs*.
- A certain part of Wurmbrand's analysis is based on the assumption that a moved constituent leaves a copy in its base position. However, in some other places, she uses traces to illustrate movement. This is done for conciseness; even though she writes t_{VP} and such things, should think of t as being shorthand for a copy of whichever constituent has been moved.

Exercises

Exercise 1 Describe *Haider's Puzzle* and Wurmbrand's solution to it. Quote data from Wurmbrand (2005) as appropriate.

Exercise 2 One of Wurmbrand's arguments is based on the *long passive* construction.

- *Question #1*: describe the main properties of the long passive. Quote data as appropriate.
- *Question #2*: explain, in your own words, which of the two compared analysis (VP complementation and Complex V-heads) captures these properties the best, and why. Quote data as appropriate.

Bonus exercise One of the aspects in which German and Dutch differ is the ordering of verbs within verb clusters. Compare the following two sentences (in fact, a number of German dialects allow Dutch-like orders).

- (1) a. ... daß Leo schwimmen gehen will.
b. ... dat Leo wil gaan swimmen.

Try to draw a tree for (2b). On the basis of the tree you draw, would you expect Dutch to behave like German with respect to adverb placement and the possibility of fronting a VP? Explain why you think so.

[Note: the actual structure of Dutch-style clusters is actually unclear, so I don't really expect you to provide a correct answer here. What I'm testing here is your ability to understand the assumptions that underlie the analysis and their consequences when applied to a slightly different set of data.]