



Vortrag im Rahmen des Linguistischen Kolloquiums

30. April 2013

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Events and serial verb constructions

Gentner and Boroditsky's (2001) proposal of the Division of Dominance and the consequent guiding role of linguistic dominance in the acquisition of verb meanings leads us to expect very significant crosslinguistic differences in their semantics. While all languages plausibly have a word for 'dog' with essentially equivalent meanings, this is not true for 'kill'. 'Kill' may be expressed in a variety of differing ways, from a monomorphemic verb root in Yimas to a serial verb construction in Watam to a clause chaining construction in Mangap Mbula. But the Watam SVCs are often flexible and expandable expressions; they are a family of constructions, not lexical items. The surface similarity of being SVCs hides deeper differences. SVCs are a number of different things that simply look alike structurally, but on deeper probing turn out to exhibit very divergent properties. None of the generally proposed properties of SVCs turn out to hold of all Watam SVCs investigated here save monoclausality, but that criterion is clearly not sufficient, as many constructions are realized in single clauses, but are not SVCs. Are there any universal defining properties of SVCs? Probably not, although the term may still prove useful as a convenient descriptive label like reduplication.

Gentner, D and Boroditsky, L. 2001. Individuation, relativity and early word learning. In Bowerman, M and Levinson, S, eds., Language Acquisition and Conceptual Development, 215-256. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

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Zeit: 16:15 Uhr

Alle Interessierten sind herzlich eingeladen!