

Toward a Compositional Event Semantics

Parsons (1990) presents an event semantics that analyzes English sentences as containing existential quantification over eventualities. In contrast to Heim & Kratzer (1998), who base their semantics upon rigid compositionality, however, Parsons does not show exactly how appropriate logical forms are obtained for given sentences. In my undergraduate graduation thesis, I knit these two frameworks together into a compositional event semantics.

Given the subject internal hypothesis, I assumed that every English sentence contains a small clause, and argued that small clauses denote functions from times to eventualities. I then argued for extensionality of eventualities, and defined the verification function, which for a given possible world w , maps eventualities to truth-values. This theory can successfully account, by means of compositional computation, for the semantic differences between small clause complements and IP complements of verbs, with respect in particular to interpretation of noun phrases therein.

Though I consider this to be a good step toward a true compositional event semantics, this theory is yet far from perfection. In this talk, I will first introduce this theory to you and then discuss its problems. Comments will be appreciated!

References

- Heim, I., & Kratzer, A. (1998). *Semantics in generative grammar*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Parsons, T. (1990). *Events in the semantics of English: A study in subatomic semantics*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Shimada, J. (2004). *What does like seem like it can be analyzed like?* Bachelor's thesis. University of Tokyo.