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Title: **Towards a Partly Aspectual Understanding of Affectedness**

Date: Friday, 04th April, 2008
Time: 12:00pm
Place: LingSem (370 Temple St. Rm. 201)

Abstract:

In this paper I discuss the notion of affectedness, intuitively defined as when a participant in an event comes to change state in some way (through a change in some property, its position, its existence, etc.).

Affectedness has played a role in a range of sometimes disparate strands of literature, including argument realization (Fillmore 1968, S. Anderson 1971, 1977, Jackendoff 1990), transitivity (Hopper and Thompson 1980, Tsunoda 1981, 1985, Testelec 1998, Naess 2003), aspect (Tenny 1992, 1994), and DP- preposing (M. Anderson 1979, Jaeggli 1986), among others. Yet seldom does such work give a linguistically-motivated, unified definition of affectedness appropriate for all of these phenomena. I begin by reviewing some of this previous work and providing a set of empirical diagnostics for affectedness, lumping together various types of real-world changes that intuitively constitute effects. I then show that affectedness is not reducible to an aspectual category, contra suggestions by Tenny (1992), Cornips and Hulk (1999), among others. Instead, I show that the aspectual notions normally tied to affectedness (measuring out and telicity) are spread out over more than one argument, including but not limited to the affected argument.

I then sketch an analysis of affectedness developed in Beavers (2006, 2007, to appear) as a ternary Figure/Path Relation (FPR) between a theme, an event, and a scale of change (following Krifka 1998, Hay et al. 1999). The scale mediates between the theme and the event in a way that captures the disjoint correlation between affectedness and aspect: themes are affected, scales measure out the event, and both are implicated in telicity. I then define several different degrees of affectedness in terms of how specific a predicate can be regarding the progress of the theme along the scale, motivated by data on object/oblique alternations (following Beavers 2006). These degrees of affectedness are related to one another implicationally to form an Affectedness Hierarchy. Finally, affectedness can be defined as a combination of standing in an FPR relation to a scale plus a high degree of affectedness on the hierarchy. I conclude by briefly discussing the role of the Affectedness Hierarchy in other phenomena, including aspectual classes.