

## **The temporal nature of the state/event distinction**

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A concrete semantic characterization of the difference between stative and eventive predicates has proved elusive. The perennial intuition that states are “static” while events are “dynamic” is difficult to translate into a model theoretic analysis other than the sortal stipulation that states and events are different. Particularly unyielding is the contrast between states and activities, which are both subpart homogeneous. In this talk, I claim that the difference between stative and eventive predicates is fundamentally temporal. Stative predicates are interpreted only at moments of time, while eventive predicates are interpreted only at intervals. Since intervals arguably consist of moments, the difference between a moment description and an interval description is one of logical degree order, which goes some way toward explaining the very robust complementarity between stative and eventive predicates in certain syntactic contexts. I demonstrate that this view presents an explanation for why progressive predicates are (counterintuitively) stative, and discuss evidence that undermines the weaker claim that stative predicates can hold at intervals as well as moments. I also show that this view fits well with recent results in psychophysics on temporal perception and has some potential to explain the association between degree gradability and stativity.