

# Lexical Semantics

## Assignment 5

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January 7, 2020

**Due by:** 2pm on January 14, 2020.

You can submit your assignment by email to `prerna.nadathur@phil.hhu.de`, hand it in in class next week, or turn in a paper copy to the Lexical Semantics box in the Linguistics department office (24.53.00.86). Let me know in advance if you will need to complete assignments in German.

### Reminders:

- Typed assignments are strongly preferred, unless you have very neat handwriting
- You may work with one another or consult additional resources in completing the assignment, but remember to cite your sources, and to write up your answers alone.
- You will NOT be penalised for mistakes related to English grammar
- You may ask questions about the homework in class on November 5. You can also email me, or request a time for office hours.

You should attempt to answer both questions.

### Question 1: Repetition

The English prefix *re-* attaches to certain verbs to create a new verb meaning roughly “V again”, where V is the meaning of the original (base) verb. For example, *Connor readdressed the letter* means “Connor addressed the letter again”. In this question, we will focus on transitive base verbs.

- (a) Some verbs cannot take the *re-* prefix for reasons that are independent of the hypotheses that you will examine in part (b). They include those verbs in (1). Explain why these uses of *re-* are odd or unacceptable.
- (1) a. ??Lindsay reate the apple.  
(~ ??Lindsay ate the apple again.)  
b. ??Devon reburned the letter.  
c. ??Sasha repeeled the carrot.

- (b) The restriction on *re-* that explains the data in (1) is not the only restriction. This part of the question examines why certain verb and direct object combinations that should be able to take *re-*, based on part (a), still do not work with *re-*. Studies have argued for one of the following two hypotheses, both of which tie the restriction to aspectual class features:

- (2) a. **Hypothesis 1:** The prefix *re-* attaches only to accomplishment base verbs.  
b. **Hypothesis 2:** The prefix *re-* attaches only to telic base verbs.

Evaluate which hypothesis better describes the data in (3). In order to do this, you need to consider the aspectual class features of the example sentences, using aspectual diagnostics to support your claims about the examples. You do not have to refer to every piece of data in your answer, but you should refer to enough data to show which hypothesis is the most successful

- (3) a. The marathoner reran the race.  
b. Tanya reread *War and Peace*.  
c. Sandy repainted the rocking chair.  
d. Terry reopened the window.  
e. Dana retranslated the poem.  
f. Kim restudied the problem.
- (4) a. ??The two-year-old rerolled the ball.  
b. ??The marathoner rewon the race.  
c. ??My sister reloved this song.  
d. ??I restamped my foot.  
e. ??Terry reresembled Kerry.  
f. ??The janitor renoticed the spot on the carpet.  
g. ??The baker repounded the bread dough.  
h. ??The microwave rebeeped.

**Note:** Although the two hypotheses are stated in terms of the base verb, it is important to remember that some verbs show aspectual class shifts, and that aspectual classification should be evaluated with respect to a verb plus argument combination. So, in trying to evaluate Hypothesis 2, for example, the question you would ask with respect to the sentence *Connor readdressed the letter* is whether or not *Connor addressed the letter* is an accomplishment, and NOT whether *addressed* by itself is an accomplishment.

## Question 2: Aspectual class and *until*

We saw that temporal modification is sensitive to the aspectual class of an event description: this is why we can use certain temporal modifiers (e.g., *in-* and *for-*phrases) as diagnoses for aspectual class. There are a number of temporal modifiers in English and German that are sensitive to aspectual class. In this question, we'll look at English *until*.

- (a) Based on the following data, what aspectual class features does *until* diagnose? In other words, which of the aspectual classes can be combined with *until*-phrases, and which ones cannot? In your answer, you should provide evidence (from some of the aspectual diagnostic tests discussed in class) for the aspectual class of examples like the ones below. You can add additional data if you would like. Your answer should also describe the requirement of *until* in terms of the aspectual class features (dynamicity, durativity, telicity).

- (5)
- a. Jordan slept until 9pm.
  - b. The company built private houses until 1998.
  - c. \*Alexis built a house until 1998.
  - d. \*I arrived at work until 10am this morning.
  - e. The marathoner ran until his legs stopped working.
  - f. Barack Obama was the U.S. president until January 2017.
  - g. Jerry was lonely until he joined a bowling team.
  - h. \*Dana finished making breakfast until 11am.
  - i. Fred coughed until someone gave him a glass of water.

- (b) Consider the following examples. You should assume that the temporal phrase modifies the whole sentence, not a sub-part of the sentence (see 6a).

- (6)
- a. The company didn't build private houses until 1998.  
~ [The company didn't build private houses] until 1998.
  - b. Alexis didn't build a house until 1998.
  - c. I didn't arrive at work until 10am this morning.
  - d. Barack Obama wasn't the U.S. president until January 2009.
  - e. Jerry wasn't lonely until he quit his bowling team.
  - f. Dana didn't finish making breakfast until 11am.

*Until* is fine in all of these examples. Based on your answer to part (a), how would you explain this?

- i. Specifically, if your answer to part (a) is correct, how would you characterize the effect that negation has on aspectual class?
- ii. Does this hypothesis hold up? Use the aspectual class diagnostics to check if the (negated) event descriptions in (6) belong the aspectual class(es) that they should belong to, based on your answer to part (a). If you run into problems using the tests, explain what the problem is.