

## The analysis of Hungarian prefixed pseudo-transitive verbs in Ramchand's First Phase Syntax

It has long been argued that there is a direct correlation between the event structure and the argument structure of verbal predicates (Levin and Rappaport Hovav 1999, Ramchand 2008, etc.). Levin and Rappaport, for example, distinguish between the following types of resultative constructions based on their temporal composition. Resultatives, that describe temporally independent events, have a complex event structure containing two subevents (*John painted the fence red*). Following from the generalization cited at the outset, the argument structure of these verbs must also contain two arguments (e.g. an agent and a patient in the case of most transitive verbs). Conversely, events that contain temporally dependent events are characterised by a simple event structure, containing only one subevent and they occur with only one structurally required argument (*The lake froze solid*).

Ramchand also assumes that lexical semantic features must be reflected in the argument structure of lexical items without directly handling the temporal description of events. She believes that argument relations are tied to an event decomposition that may include a causing subevent, a core process and a result state. These relations are syntactically represented in Ramchand's 'first phase syntax' as each verb phrase may contain the following 3 projections: a causing projection (*initP*), a process projection (*procP*) and a result projection (*resP*). The initial claim of this paper, namely that the argument structure of a verbs mirrors its event structure, is reflected in Ramchand's model by virtue of the fact that each projection in the first phase syntax is an instantiation of a possible subpart (subevent) of the whole event.

In my talk, I would like to corroborate Ramchand's view of the lexicon by examining the lexical syntactic-representation of the prefixed version of Hungarian pseudo-transitive verbs, such as *eszik* 'eat', *olvas* 'read', and *vasal* 'iron'. Verbal particles (prefixes) in Hungarian generally render verbs lexically perfective. The base verbs of prefixed verbal constructions are aspectually ambiguous when occurring with quantized objects (*a book*), and they become atelic when taking non-quantized objects (*books*). The prefixed version is, however, unambiguously telic with quantized objects (*Péter megevett egy répát* 'Peter meg-ate a carrot') and incompatible with non-quantized objects (*\*Péter megevett répákat* 'Peter meg-ate carrots') or null objects (*\*Péter megevett* 'Peter meg-ate'). More specifically, the prefix *meg-* seems to introduce a new (resultative) subevent into the event structure of the simple verb, thereby augmenting its argument structure with an obligatory patient argument. In the system that Ramchand is pursuing, this phenomenon can easily be accounted for since it can be argued that the prefix *meg-* introduces a resultative projection (through event composition) into the lexical-syntactic representation of the verb *eszik* 'eat'. Nevertheless, the same line of reasoning cannot hold in its original form for Hungarian achievement verbs, such as *dob* 'throw' for two reasons: (1) Achievement verbs are assumed by Ramchand to contain a result projection in their lexical-syntactic representation (prior to prefixation). (2) Interestingly enough, when occurring with the prefix *meg-*, the patient argument of the verb *dob* is the entity that something (e.g. a ball) has been thrown at, whereas the patient argument of the base verb (i.e. without the prefix) is the entity that has been thrown (e.g. a ball). These observations serve both to strengthen and take issue with Ramchand's First Phase Syntax in its current form.

## References

- Levin, B. & Malka Rappaport Hovav. (1999) Two structures for compositionally derived events. In *Proceedings of SALT 9*, 199-223, Ithaca, NY: Cornell Linguistics Circle Publications.
- Ramchand, G. (2008) *Verb Meaning and the Lexicon: A First Phase Syntax*. Cambridge: CUP.