

Abstract

This thesis questions the standard view of the interpretation of Manner Adverbials, according to which this part of speech modifies the process/action denoted by the verb like in (1) or the underlying event denoted by the sentence.

(1) Sie sammelte die Nägel laut auf. (1') She gathered up the nails loudly.

Corpus studies and acceptability tests with native speakers of German of the semantic and syntactic properties of Manner Adverbials in contemporary German show that this is too narrow a definition. Examples like the ones in (2)-(5) show that this kind of modifier gives rise to other interpretations as well, namely the qualifying of a result state of the process/action denoted by the verb (2), of an inherent "hidden" component of the verb semantics (3), of an inherent parameter of the verb semantics (4) and of the internal event structure (5).

(2) Sie färbten den Stoff schön ein. (2') They coloured the tissue beautifully.
(3) Sie zogen das Kind bunt an. (3') They dressed the child colourfully.
(4) Das Auto fuhr langsam. (4') The car went slowly.
(5) Er übte das Musikstück gründlich. (5') He rehearsed the piece of music thoroughly.

The data raises the issue of whether these various interpretations can be theoretically accounted for in a general and systematic way. However, a precondition for a systematic account of the variation in the interpretation of Manner Adverbials reported by the tests are suitable taxonomies of the word classes involved in this kind of modification, i.e. verbs and adjectives. Therefore, a proposal for such taxonomies is put forward. The target units of the Manner Adverbials in (1)-(5) are analyzed within the theoretic framework of event semantics, taking an internal structure of the event into account. A formal model of the semantic and conceptual representation of the modification by Manner Adverbials is proposed which attempts to cover all semantic relevant distinctions reported by the data. The thesis concludes with a brief overview of the syntactic characteristics of Manner Adverbials in German which is linked to the semantic and conceptual account proposed.

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