

Discussion

- 1) What's an agent ?
 - 2) What's the nature of the cause relation?
 - 3) How much of all this is in the grammar? in the cognitive system?
 - 4) Commonalities, differences between physical forces?
 - 5) Initiate, Process, Result
 - 6) Normality
 - 7) "I liked X's paper because..."
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- 1) What's an agent ?

Ph. Initiators.

Hei. Agents controlling the unfolding of the event. Initiators: no control.

G. 3 main strategies to locate subject in syntax: 1) one position structurally

- 2) Several features
- 3) Mixed position.

Jbeavers.

Agents causing events? Events causing events?

Ph. Tendency to talk of events causing events first.

RTh. Problems in Dowty's approach.

BC. Can the agent initiate an event?

H. Configurations of forces can be causes, but can they be agents?

Ph. "Pressure will cause the water to remain liquid". Pressure: initiator.

G. Pervasive fact in English: hard if you take a DP to make a distinction between events and individuals. "This book weighs 12pnds" vs "This book is interesting". Maybe agents and events.causes: parts of the same system.

B. Indeed, maybe the grammar doesn't care, but we care at a more abstract level.

H. Some grammar cares.

O. A DP you would consider an agent can appear as an event if you see there is no controlling.

JB. Teleological capabilities: some aspects may simply have to do with sentience.

O. Difference with a causative morpheme that identifies its initiator and those that do not.

BC. What does the grammar care about then?

G. From an early age, children decide that animate things differ from inanimate things ???
Example: same force configurations but differences in surprise if it is two inanimate things slapped against each other, or a living creature against another living creature.

Ph. Surprise at action at a distance between people instead of inanimates. Tendency to assume animacy. Beginning of causation around 4 months. (cf. L. Spelke et al.)

Ph. Causation is about the physical things. But can extend to intentions, namely forces that bring about change.

Rth. J. Doyle (?) relevant.

Normality

Rth. Does show up all over the place.

H. Inertia: what happens normally.

Ph. Cf. Representation momentum. Ex: picture of a rocket. Same picture adjusted up or down. If adjusted up, people more likely to think it did not move than if it is adjusted slightly down. Suggest that people “see forces”, just by anticipation over the statics.

H. Internal causation. Way of describing events happening events in an inertial world. Ex: “flowers blossoming”.

G. Debate concerning causative/inchoative. “The stick broke”: internal causation? (Chierchian Reinhart).

H. “Blossom” unaccusative in a lot of languages. Something may be classified as unergative or unaccusative depending on...

Rth. You don't have to give a reason for a non-change, only for a change. Examples of mixtures of actions and physical processes: dribbling a basket ball, flushing down the toilets. You get some mixed of internal and external causation. Inertia comes up when one has to determine the effect of an initial action. Connected to the frame problem. But there is also the ramification problem, the qualification problem. All of them interesting problems. After a change has occurred, you want to maximize the things that occurred.

Ph. People poor at factoring in the shape of object. If you can treat the object as a dimensionless point, people are as good as can be.

BC. Internally caused things as dispositions? Ex; generics, natural laws, seem to be very much like dispositions.

H. Back to teleological capabilities. It's like natural laws applied to human laws.

Ph. Woman who inexplicably goes in other direction when the agent allows her to go in the expected direction.

H. Consequences vs goals in PE's talk suggesting a discussion between inertia and plans coming up again