Event Representation in Language and Cognition

Event Representation in Language and Cognition examines new research into how the mind deals with the experience of events. Empirical research into the cognitive processes involved when people view events and talk about them is still a young field. The chapters by leading experts draw on data from the description of events in spoken and signed languages, first and second language acquisition, co-speech gesture and eye movements during language production, and from non-linguistic categorization and other tasks. The book highlights newly found evidence for how perception, thought, and language constrain each other in the experience of events. It will be of particular interest to linguists, psychologists, and philosophers, as well as to anyone interested in the representation and processing of events.

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Language, culture and cognition

Editor
Stephen C. Levinson,
Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics

This series looks at the role of language in human cognition – language in both its universal, psychological aspects and its variable, cultural aspects. Studies focus on the relation between semantic and conceptual categories and processes, especially as these are illuminated by cross-linguistic and cross-cultural studies, the study of language acquisition and conceptual development, and the study of the relation of speech production and comprehension to other kinds of behaviour in a cultural context. Books come principally, though not exclusively, from research associated with the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics in Nijmegen, and in particular the Language and Cognition Group.

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11 Jürgen Bohnemeyer and Eric Pederson (eds.) *Event Representation in Language and Cognition*

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Acknowledgments

The origins of this volume lie in the Event Representation project at the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics. From 2000 to 2004, this project brought together researchers studying lesser documented languages in the field and scholars studying child language development to explore universals and variation in how events are described across languages. Several of the contributing authors were members or external collaborators of this project (Bohnemeyer and Bowerman jointly directed the project and Brown, Eisenbeiß, Enfield, Essegbey, Kita, Narasimhan, Pederson, and Slobin participated) or members of institute research projects on co-speech gesture, language production, multilingualism, and sign language who collaborated with Event Representation (Dobel, Gullberg, Özyürek, Perniss). The Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics is unique in the breadth of the different approaches to the interface between language and cognition its researchers are able to provide. The multifaceted perspective that is the result of this breadth is well reflected in the present collection. Moreover, the research presented in five of the ten chapters of the body of the book was wholly or in part funded by the Max Planck Society (Bohnemeyer *et al*., Dobel *et al*., Gullberg, Özyürek, and Perniss, Slobin *et al*.).

The Event Representation project was highlighted by two workshops dedicated to the topic of event encoding in language and mind. These workshops brought together participants of the project and some of the premier scholars of event representations in linguistics, psychology, and philosophy from outside the project. The first of these was organized by Bohnemeyer at the Max Planck Institute in Nijmegen in 1999; the second in 2004 was organized by Pederson and Russell S. Tomlin, of the University of Oregon, as well as by Bohnemeyer. This second symposium was sponsored by the University of Oregon Foundation, the University of Oregon College of Arts and Sciences, and the Department of Linguistics.

As for the current volume, the chapters by Bohnemeyer *et al*., Dobel *et al*., Loucks and Pederson, and Pawley all evolved out of presentations at the Eugene symposium. Carroll and von Stutterheim and Wolff likewise presented from their ongoing research on event representation in language and

cognition in Eugene. Zacks and Tversky's joint research was presented on both occasions (by Tversky in Nijmegen and by Zacks in Eugene). It was during the Eugene symposium that the idea for this volume was conceived. It was clear from the beginning that the goal would be a record, not so much of the proceedings of the symposium, but rather of the state of the art in research on the relation between linguistic and cognitive event representations. Consistent with this, however much the current volume may trace a history back to this symposium, the chapters reflect a broad body of scholarship far beyond the original conference.

We would like to thank the contributors, the editors in charge of the project at Cambridge University Press, Helen Barton and Joanna Garbutt, and the series editor Steve Levinson. We should particularly thank Levinson, who in his capacity as Director of the Language and Cognition research group at the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics instigated the Event Representation project, made it possible, and served as a source of ideas and advice throughout its development. We would also like to thank the two anonymous reviewers of the book proposal for their valuable suggestions for improvement, Carolyn O'Meara for compiling the bibliography, Randi Tucker for assistance during the proofreading process, and Linda Konnerth and Holly Lakey for producing the index, and Jill Lake for meticulous and impeccable copy-editing. In the end, this volume has been the product of the efforts of many individuals contributing in many different ways.