

Experiencer arguments of
prospective psych verbs in German –
how are they realized?

Tabea Reiner | June 20th, 2014

What I am not going to talk about:

- Experiencers in general
- All kinds of experiencers of prospective verbs

What I am going to talk about:

The anticipating experiencer of prospective verbs

More on prospective verbs I

Defining criteria: a prospective verb...

1. ... has an event argument.
2. ... has a lexical meaning that temporally situates this event wholly in the time after the verbal event.
3. ... has a lexical meaning that includes anticipation of the later event.

More on prospective verbs II

Examples (from a sample of 108 prospective verbs):

*absagen anstehen beabsichtigen beantragen
befehlen befürchten bevorstehen bitten drohen
entgegenfiebern erlauben erwarten grauen
harren hoffen verbieten versprechen
vorschlagen zukommen*

The anticipating experiencer of prospective verbs – how is it realized?

Options for realizing the anticipating exp.

Realization	Potential example
NOM	<i>erwarten</i> ₁
GEN	?
DAT	<i>grauen</i>
AKK	<i>erwarten</i> ₂
PP	<i>zukommen</i>
(---	<i>anstehen</i>)

Hypothesis

At closer inspection, NOM is the only option!

Argument

Step 1

Numerous examples with NOM, e.g.:
beabsichtigen, befehlen, erwarten, ...

In total: 95/108

Argument

Step 2

So what about the remaining 13 verbs?

They don't realize the anticipating experiencer at all!

Argument

→ Step 2 in more detail

Group 1: clearly intransitive verbs which realize the event argument as subject

anliegen, anstehen, ausstehen, sich ankündigen

Argument

→ Step 2 in more detail

Group 2: potentially transitive verbs which realize the event argument as subject and a **non-anticipating** affectee as object

*bevorstehen, drohen, drohen_{semi-modal},
erwarten₂, sich nähern, zukommen*

Argument

→ **Step 2 in more detail**

Group 3: verbs which realize a **non-anticipating** experiencer as subject
bedürfen, benötigen

Argument

→ Step 2 in more detail

Group 4: potentially problematic verbs

- *versprechen*_{semi-modal}?
- *grauen*?

Result: No verbs in sample which realize the anticipating experiencer as object!

So what? Contra general expectation for psych verbs (e.g., Kutscher 2009:163)!

→ Explanation...

... by models of argument realization
(e.g., Dowty 1991)

→ Anticipating experiencer generally
more agentive than future event?

**Anticipating experiencer generally
more agentive than future event!**

References

- Dowty, David R. (1979): Word meaning and Montague Grammar. The semantics of verbs and times in Generative Semantics and in Montague's PTQ. Dordrecht/Boston/London: Reidel. (= Synthese Language Library: Texts and Studies in Linguistics and Philosophy;7).
- Kutscher, Silvia (2009): Kausalität und Argumentrealisierung. Zur Konstruktionsvarianz bei Psychverben am Beispiel europäischer Sprachen. Tübingen: Niemeyer. (= Linguistische Arbeiten; 528).
- Reiner, Tabea (2013): Prospektive Verben im Deutschen. An der Schnittstelle von lexikalischer Semantik und Satzsyntax. Heidelberg: Winter. (= Germanistische Bibliothek; 50).