
Gerunds as *ad hoc* event kinds

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This talk extends the notion of *ad hoc* kinds from the nominal domain (Mendia 2019) to the event domain, and proposes that POSS-*ing* gerunds in English such as *John's visiting Mary* are a consistent way of forming *ad hoc* event kinds.

POSS-*ing* is an -ing form that takes direct complements and a preceding possessor interpreted always as the subject and is analyzed as event kind descriptions by Grimm & McNally (2015). Such expressions lack reference to event tokens, being incompatible with eventive predicates and adjectives that assign properties to events (“narrow containers” in Vendler 1967):

(1) *John's drawing the picture {happened/took place} yesterday/was {slow/fast}.

I argue that POSS-*ing* denotes *ad hoc* kinds, which are different from well-established event kinds. First, they can be formed in an unrestricted manner. POSS-*ing* freely takes referential arguments and spatiotemporal modification:

(2) Hannah's breaking John's vase yesterday at the party was astonishing.

Second, instead of partitioning a (super)kind, these *ad hoc* event kinds are constructed by generalizing over one (or some) event tokens. The token event that the kind is built upon is sometimes present in the discourse or, as is usually the case, presupposed to exist:

(3) John did not imagine Hannah's breaking his vase. → Hannah broke John's vase.

Although this presupposition is not always present, it can be argued that POSS-*ing* is a referential expression, and referentiality does not necessarily correspond to presupposition or discourse givenness. With the event token in mind as an instantiation, the kind is constructed with descriptive content to identify it.

This analysis will shed new light on the contrast between narrow containers (1) and predicates that accept POSS-*ing* as an argument (“loose containers”, e.g. *surprised me*). The traditional view is that narrow containers only select for event tokens. With the POSS-*ing* in the subject position denoting a kind, I argue that the sentence must express a generalization which holds in virtue of the subject's descriptive content, also accounting for POSS-*ing*'s opacity.

References: • Grimm, S., & McNally, L. (2015). The -*ing* dynasty: Rebuilding the semantics of nominalizations. In S. D'Antonio, M. Moroney, & C. R. Little (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 25th Semantics and Linguistic Theory Conference (SALT)* (Vol. 25, pp. 82–102). Ithaca, NY: LSA and CLC Publications. • Mendia, J. A. (2019). Reference to *ad hoc* kinds. *Linguistics and philosophy*, 43, 589–631. • Vendler, Z. (1967). *Linguistics in philosophy*. Ithaca, NY:

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