

Events and their results- pragmatic constraints on copredication

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Apart from their eventive interpretation deverbal *-ung* nominals in German show a variety of other readings, and in some contexts they even display more than one reading at a time (copredication). The constraints on this phenomenon have not yet been dealt with in the literature and this paper will show that this phenomenon cannot be explained by semantics and compositional processes alone, but underlies pragmatic principles.

The suffix *-ung* in German forms nominals from verbal bases that can be interpreted not only as nominalised events, but also as states and several kinds of abstract and concrete entities:

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|------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <i>Entführung</i> ‘kidnapping’ | EVENT |
| <i>Absperrung</i> ‘obstruction’ | RESULT STATE / OBJECT |
| <i>Einladung</i> ‘invitation’ | INFO OBJECT (medium) |
| <i>Zahlung</i> ‘payment’ | RESULT (abstract) |
| <i>Lüftung</i> ‘air conditioning’ | MEANS |
| <i>Unterführung</i> ‘underpass’ | LOCATION |
| <i>Bedienung</i> ‘waitress’ | AGENT |
| <i>Verwaltung</i> ‘administration’ | INSTITUTION/ COLLECTIVE |

Table 1. The semantics of deverbal *-ung* nominals

In some contexts, however, it is not clear how to interpret such nominals, because the selectional restrictions of two conflicting reading indicators apply to one token of the nominal (in this case for an event = EV and a result = RE):

- (1) Die [langwierige]_{EV} Übersetzung [verkaufte sich millionenfach]_{RE}.
‘The tedious translation sold million-fold.’
- (2) Die [aus über 100 Teilen bestehende]_{RE} Absperrung [dauerte drei Tage]_{RE}.
‘The obstruction consisting of over 100 parts took three days.’

This phenomenon was labelled “copredication” (Asher 2008, Cruse 2000) and analysed e.g. as local disambiguation (Solstad 2008, Pustejovsky 1995): that means that the indicators would only refer to some aspect or reading of the nominal within the DP and separately within the VP so that there is no fixed interpretation of the nominal for the whole sentence. This could account for the composition, but not for the exceptions to copredication, which have not yet been addressed or explained in the literature (compare (1) and (2) with (3) and (4)):

- (3) ?Die [einfache]_{EV} Übersetzung [verkaufte sich millionenfach]_{RE}.
‘The easy translation sold million fold.’
- (4) ?Die Absperrung [aus Holz]_{RE} [dauerte drei Tage]_{EV}.
‘The wooden obstruction took three days.’

I claim that a copredication with an event and a result reading is only possible if there is a noteworthy or salient relation between the two in terms of Nunberg’s predicate transfer (2004) and hence copredication cannot be fully explained by semantic principles. Indeed, there are general ontological constraints that concern the combination of types, e.g. an eventive and an agentive reading as in (5):

- (5) ??Die **Leitung** der Anwaltskanzlei ist [schwierig]_{EV} und hat [angerufen]_{AGENT}
‘The easy translation sold million fold.’

Nevertheless, in the case of derived nominals, eventive and object-like readings can still be combined if there is a causal or otherwise salient relation as in (1) and (2): In (1), the relation is causal: the translation was not easy, but now many people buy it, because it is something special. In (2) the huge amount of pieces justifies the long duration.

However, if such a salient relation is not given as e.g. in (3), the expectations not met have to be licensed by local discourse markers- in this case, that something easy is something special:

- (3') Die einfache Übersetzung verkaufte sich **dennoch** millionenfach.
'The easy translation **still** sold million fold.'

(3') can be paraphrased as: Contrary to expectations, the result earned me a lot of money, **although** the related event was easy. Similarly:

- (6) i. Die [täuschend echte]_{RE} Fälschung [dauerte lange]_{EV}.
'The deceptively real-looking imitation took a long time.'

ii. ?Die [schlechte]_{RE} Fälschung [dauerte lange]_{EV}.
'The bad imitation took a long time.'

iii. Die [schlechte]_{RE} Fälschung [dauerte **trotzdem** lange]_{EV}.
'The bad imitation **still** took a long time.'
- (7) Nur wenn man das genaue System kennt kann man sagen, ob die Messung [regelmäßig durchgeführt wurde]_{EV} und **somit** [verwertbar]_{RE} ist.
'Only if you know the exact system you can judge whether the measurement was conducted regularly and is hence usable.'

The telic verb in (7) also helps to license the event – result combination, because it shows that the event is completed and hence creates a kind of non-simultaneity, while *somit* 'hence' points back to the reason for being usable: the proper measurement. In addition, structural aspects influence the acceptability of copredication, cf. (8) with (9):

- (8) Die Übersetzung, die auf dem Tisch liegt, war schwierig.
'The translation that lies on the table was difficult.'
- (9) ?Die Übersetzung ist/war schwierig und liegt auf dem Tisch.
'The translation is/was difficult and lies on the table.'

This talk will show that copredication cannot be explained on semantic and compositional grounds alone and will shed light on the pragmatic principles that license the combination of distinct types in one token.

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