Title: Time and Viewpoint in Narrative Discourse

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Introduction

This Theme Session brings together cognitive linguistic research on two aspects that are central to narrative discourse: time and viewpoint. Studies on time in narrative and viewpoint in narrative have largely developed into two separate areas of research, although both aspects are closely related. This relation follows from the complex structure of narrative discourse which connects three time loci: the time locus of the narrated, the time locus of the narrator, and the time locus of the reader (Currie, 2007). Temporal references can be linked to either one of these loci, with the result that different viewpoints are profiled and blended as the narrative unfolds in time.

Previous studies have provided initial insights into the interaction between the linguistic manifestation of time and viewpoint in narratives. For example, tense shifts and temporal adverbs typically signal shifts in time frame as well as viewpoint (Sanders, 2010). Likewise, choice of tense affects the temporal distance between the viewpoints of narrator and character, with past tense narration resulting in a larger distance than present tense narration (Dancygier, 2012). In a different way, the stylistic device of Free Indirect Discourse blends the viewpoints of narrator and character by combining the past tense (anchored to the narrator’s time locus) with the temporal adverb now (anchored to the character’s time locus) (Nikiforidou, 2012). All of these linguistic constructions regulate the dynamic alignment between the viewpoints of narrator, character, and reader, thereby modifying readers’ cognitive representation of the progression and regression of narrative time.

This Theme Session builds on this developing area of research and aims to work towards a further synthesis of studies on time and viewpoint in narrative. The interaction between time and viewpoint will be explored in ten paper presentations which focus on the linguistic construction of time in relation to the various distinctive and blended viewpoints involved in the representation of the narrative. The papers address issues relating to the form and function of these various time and viewpoint categories in written and signed narratives, covering a
wide diversity of languages and genres. Included are analytical and methodological contributions on the use of pronouns (Virdee), tense (Verhagen, Nijk, Stukker), demonstratives (Dancygier), animacy (Trompenaers), connectives (Oversteegen), body partitioning (Janzen), and deixis (Sanders & Van Krieken) as expressions of (the interaction between) narrative time and viewpoint.

References


Authors and titles of papers

1. José Sanders & Kobie van Krieken (Radboud University, Nijmegen)
Interactions between Time and Viewpoint in News Narratives

2. Douglass Virdee (Durham University)
Multiple Selves: Investigating the Spatiotemporal Division of the Self through Tensed Use of the First Person Pronoun in Narrative

3. Arie Verhagen (Leiden University)
Shifting Tenses, Blending Viewpoints, and the Nature of Narrative Communication

4. Barbara Dancygier (University of British Columbia, Vancouver)
Tense, Personal Pronouns and Demonstratives: How Viewpoint Networks Structure Grammatical Choices

5. Thijs Trompenaers (Radboud University, Nijmegen)
Adopting the Inanimate Viewpoint in Narrative Fiction

6. Arjan Nijk (VU Amsterdam)
The Historical Present and Representation Spaces

7. Terry Janzen (University of Manitoba, Winnipeg)
Shared Spaces, Shared Mind: Connecting Past and Present Viewpoints in American Sign Language Narratives

8. Leonoor Oversteegen (Tilburg University)
Temporal Perspective and the Flow of Time

9. Ninke Stukker (University of Groningen)
Structuring 'Time' across Narrative Genres