

Emotions and „the affective realm“

In this talk, I want to investigate the extent to which „emotion“ can be singled out as a conceptual category that is relevant to linguistic semantics and can be semantically contrasted with other affective phenomena like moods, sentiments, etc. (for their classification I rely mostly on Ben Ze'ev 2000). I argue that distinctions in the German lexicon, which tend to group emotions with sentiments, as opposed to moods or affective traits, are triggered first and foremost by the relationality of a concept. In line with this, I present linguistic evidence supporting the view that the identification of an emotion is dependent only on the parameters of evaluation (but not e.g. on the surge of a feeling). In particular, I argue that the identity of „evaluations“ is the factor that decides on the countability of emotions, and that this factor also underlies the distinction between „stative“ and „punctual“ psych verbs that has been observed for Spanish by Marín & McNally (2011).

A crucial argument for the general claim as to the role of evaluations comes from the scope effect in the German sentences (a) Ich habe mich zweimal über seine seltsamen Wünsche geärgert [= 2 instances of anger corresponding to two different demands] vs. (b) (?) Ich habe mich über seine seltsamen Wünsche zweimal geärgert [= 2 instances of anger that require a difference in the parameters of evaluation of the same demands].

If time permits, I will also discuss how the identification of the object of evaluation in an emotion helps to distinguish true „emotion predicates“ in the lexicon from borderline cases that may refer to emotions only via a lexical shift (e.g. hope, love).

References: A. Ben Ze'ev (2000): *The Subtlety of Emotions*. MIT Press. – R. Marín & L. McNally (2011): "Inchoativity, change of state, and telicity: evidence from Spanish reflexive psychological verbs." *NLLT*, 29, 467–502)