Semantic Representation and Complement Realization: The Case of *Remember* Revisited

Rainer Osswald & Anja Latrouite

Institute for Language and Information
Department of General Linguistics
Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf, Germany

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Overview

- Brief review of VAN VALIN & WILKINS (1993) ("*remember* paper")
- Reanalysis of proposed semantic representation; comparison with other (European) languages
- Suggestions for an improved representation
- Complement selection in German (vs. English)

Van Valin & Wilkins (1993)

Predicting Syntactic Structure from Semantic Representations: 'Remember' in English and its Equivalents in Mparntwe Arrernte

Goal: Deduce syntactic complement types from lexical-semantic representations.

Example: English verb *remember*

(1) a. John remembered that he had locked the door. (*Cognition/Fact*)

b. John remembered locking the door. (*Perception/Experience*)

c. John remembered to lock the door. (*Psych-Action/Intention*)

Observation: Embedded proposition '**lock**(John, door)' is semantically an argument, but appears in three syntactic forms.

Van Valin & Wilkins (1993)

Observation: NP objects allow the same range of interpretations as the different syntactic complement types:

(2) John remembered X (e.g. his car).

(3) a. John remembered something about X. (*Cognition*)
b. John remembered seeing X / driving X / . . . . (*Experience*)
c. John remembered to do something with X. (*Psych-Action*)

Consequences

1. The interpretation of propositional arguments is not a function of the complement types.
2. The semantic relation holding between the complement-taking predicate and the propositional complement affect the realization of propositional arguments.

Van Valin & Wilkins (1993)

Analysis

- A single (parametrized) lexical-semantic representation covering all three interpretations of *remember* complements.
- First suggestion for a decompositional representation:

  INGR **think.again**(x)**about.something.be.in.mind.from.before**(y)

  The achievement sense of *remember* is taken as basic because of the psych-action interpretation.
- The semantic type of the propositional argument (fact, experience, intention) gives rise to a specific syntactic complement type (via the **Interclausal Relations Hierarchy**).

Reanalysis

Observations

1. The finite and participle complements are closer to each other than to the infinitival complement.

2. The psych-action interpretation of *remember* has a special status compared to the cognition and experience readings.

Syntactic Distinctions

Syntax-semantics mismatch of infinitival complements, in contrast to finite and participle complements.

Tests: Clefting, passivization, . . .

(4) a. It was that he had locked the door that John remembered.

b. It was locking the door that John remembered.

c. *It was to lock the door that John remembered.

(5) a. That he had locked the door was remembered by John.

b. *To lock the door was remembered by John.

Syntactic Distinctions

RRG juncture-nexus types for *remember*

(6) a. John remembered that Mary locked the door.
(**clausal subordination**)

b. John remembered Mary locking the door.
(**core coordination**)

c. John remembered locking the door.
(**core subordination**)

d. John remembered to lock the door.
(**core cosubordination**)

Interclausal Semantic Relations Hierarchy

$\ldots >$ Cognition $>$ Direct perception $>$ Psych-Action $> \ldots$

Semantic Contrasts

- The finite and participle complements overlap semantically with each other, but not with the infinitival complement.
- The semantically close verb *recall* differs from *remember* in not allowing the psych-action interpretation.

(7) John recalled that he had locked the door / locking the door / *to lock the door.

- Psych-action *remember* is **implicative** (KARTTUNEN 1971)

(8) a. John remembered to lock the door
$\rightarrow$ John locked the door.

b. John didn't remember ($=$ forgot) to lock the door
$\rightarrow$ John didn't lock the door.

German & French

1. *remember* (cognition, experience)

   German

   sich erinnern an (transitive *erinnern* $\approx$ English *remind*)

   French

   se rappeler (or *se souvenir de*)

2. *remember (to do)* (psych-action)

   German *daran denken zu tun*

   (9) Denke daran, die Tür abzuschließen!
   (Remember to lock the door!)

   French *penser à faire*

German & French

Notice: German *denken an* allows two interpretations:

(10) Peter hat daran gedacht, die Tür abzuschließen.
Peter has thought, the door to lock

(11) a. Peter remembered to lock the door.
b. Peter thought of locking the door.

Notice also (Oxford Dictionary of English):

think to do something

have sufficient foresight or awareness to do something:
I hadn't thought to warn Rachel about him.

Mparntwe Arrernte

Indigenous Australian language (Alice Springs, Central Australia).
VAN VALIN & WILKINS (1993) describe two lexical items in Arrernte:

irlpangke-

- intransitive verb;
- takes dative nominal or subordinated clause with clitic *-rle* as complementizer;
- encodes the stative cognition interpretation of *remember* $\approx$ 'have in mind again something known from before'.

itelare-

- transitive verb $\approx$ 'to know';
- cognizer is *actively aware* of the propositional content;
- encodes psych-action sense of *remember*, when used with a purposive adjunct (marked by *-tyeke*).

Aspectual Distinctions

Remember vs. *recall* reconsidered:

(12) a. John remembered/??recalled abruptly what had happened last night.

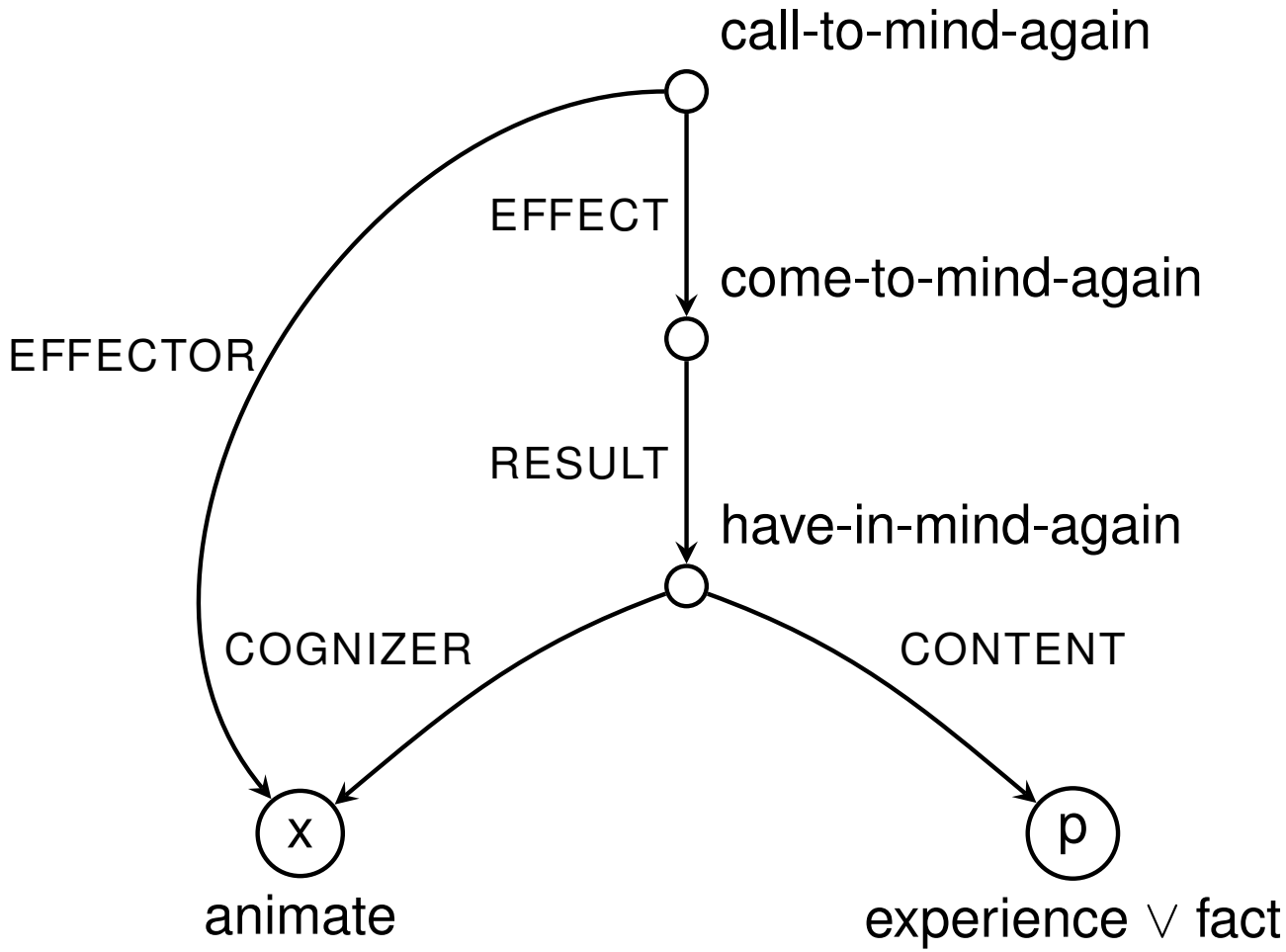
b. John was remembering/?recalling one cold morning, his father shoveling snow, . . .

Observations

- *Recall* presupposes volition and control by the experiencer.
- The **stative** reading of *remember* ($\approx$ 'having something in mind again') can be regarded as the basic interpretation, with possible **aspectual shifts** on the **ingression** or the **intentional evocation** of this state.

Aspectual Distinctions

Aspectual shifts of the basic meaning of *remember*



Semantic Analysis

Oxford Dictionary of English

remember [with infinitive]

do something that one has undertaken to do or that is necessary or advisable: *did you remember to post the letters?*

Preliminary **explication** “Wierzbickian style”:

X remembers to do Y:

X undertakes to do Y or X thinks it necessary or advisable to do Y; because of this, X does Y.

Semantic Analysis

Digression: *Remember* in FrameNet

Remembering_to_do (Uses: Intentionally_act, Purpose, Rememb._inform.)

A **Cognizer** thinks of and performs an **Action** that is a self- or other-imposed task or some other kind of desireable behavior. The **Action** may involve a **Salient_entity** in some way affected by the **Cognizer**. If a **Salient_entity** is mentioned, the **Action** is left unexpressed.

Lexical units: *forget*, *remember*

Remembering_experience (Uses: Cogitation)

A **Cognizer** calls up an episodic memory of past **Experience** or an **Impression** of a **Salient_entity** formed on the basis of past experience. The **Cognizer** may also remember the **Salient_entity** in a particular **State**, which serves as a frame of reference in the **Cognizer**'s mind. When attention is focused on a **Salient_entity**, then mention of a global **Experience** is excluded and typically, but not always, either a **State** or **Impression** of the **Salient_entity** is presented.

Lexical units: *forget*, *look back*, *recall*, *remember*, *reminisce*

Semantic Analysis

Digression: *Remember* in FrameNet

Remembering_information (Uses: Awareness)

A **Cognizer** retains facts in memory and is able to retrieve them. The **Mental_content** may be presented in clearly propositional form as a finite clause. It may also take the form of an embedded question or be a concealed question in the form of a simple NP.

Lexical units: *draw blank*, *forget*, *remember*

Memory (Uses: Eventive_affecting; Is Used By: Evoking)

This frame is concerned with **Cognizer**s remembering and forgetting mental **Content**. [Additional core element: **Topic**]

Lexical units: *bethink_oneself*, *forget*, *recall*, *remember*, *recollect*, *retain*

Evoking (Uses: Memory)

Some **Stimulus** causes a **Cognizer** to think of a prior **Phenomenon** due to its perceived similarity.

Lexical units: *remind*, *bring to mind*, *evoke*, *call to mind*, *recall*, . . .

Semantic Analysis

General Principles

- **Formalize** all (relevant) aspects of meaning.
- Use a **uniform representation** formalism.
- Use well-defined sets of **semantic primitives** and **composition mechanisms**.

Example X remembers to do Y

Presupposition	X intends to perform Y
Implication	X performs Y
Default implication	X performs Y volitionally

Complement Selection in German (vs. English)

Nexus type of infinitival complements?

Obligatory or optional correlative pronouns or prepositional proforms:

(13) a. Peter hat **es** geschafft, die Tür abzuschließen.
'Peter managed to lock the door'

b. Peter hat **daran** gedacht, die Tür abzuschließen.
'Peter remembered to lock the door'

Intraposed **Mittelfeld** position:

(14) Peter hat [die Tür abzuschließen] vergessen/versucht/vorgehabt.
'Peter forgot / tried / intended to lock the door.'

$\rightsquigarrow$ **extraposition** $\rightsquigarrow$ subordination.

However: Mittelfeld position and correlative pronouns or prepositional proforms seem to exclude each other, in general.

Complement Selection in German (vs. English)

Nexus type of infinitival complements?

Clefting: only marginally acceptable in German.

Passivization:

(15) Die Tür abzuschließen wurde (von Peter) vergessen / versucht.
'To lock the door was forgotten / tried (by Peter).'

Notice: Reflexive verbs do not passivize, e.g., *sich weigern* ('refuse'), *sich erdreisten* ('dare').

Implications:

- In German, core junctures seem to be realized by subordination.
- More reliable tests of the nexus type are necessary.
- Maybe, a more general conception of clause linkage can be helpful (cf. BIKKEL, to appear).

Thank You for Your Attention!