

Event Anaphora: Refer back with Aspect

This talk argues that event anaphoricity is not limited to overt anaphoric expressions (e.g., *do so*, *do it*, *do this/that*), but can also be encoded in aspectual operators, focusing on evidence from Bangla. I propose that Bangla perfective aspect carries an event-anaphoric presupposition requiring a contextually salient event that exists in the speaker's doxastic (belief) worlds.

Puzzle 1 concerns contrasts between the Bangla simple past (perfective) and present perfect that cannot be accounted for by standard temporal or aspectual semantics. In particular, negated perfective sentences trigger expectation/planning-failure inferences (surprise or disappointment), which standard perfective semantics cannot derive. These inferences arise because the event-anaphoric presupposition projects through negation, creating a mismatch between the event existed in speaker's doxastic world and its non-occurrence in the actual world.

Puzzle 2 concerns evidentiality: while the present perfect allows indirect evidential readings, the Bangla simple past is infelicitous in indirect evidential contexts but acceptable in direct perceptual contexts. Experimental results confirm a strong preference for the present perfect in indirect evidential contexts and categorical rejection of the simple past. The paper argues that existing modal and speech-act-based approaches to evidentiality cannot capture these facts.

The analysis derives evidential restrictions from the same event-anaphoric presupposition: indirect evidence fails because in a inferred situation, the co-referred event does not exist in the speaker's doxastic worlds, leading to presupposition failure, whereas direct perceptual evidence satisfies the presupposition. The paper concludes that evidentiality can emerge from independently motivated mechanisms of event anaphoricity, offering a new, unified account of aspect, negation, and evidentiality in Bangla, with support from cross-linguistic data.