

# Good manners: On the degree effect of good events

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## 1. Introduction

### TWO READINGS OF *well*

- (1) a. He has written the article **well**. MANNER  
b. They are **well** acquainted. 'DEGREE'

### ENGLISH AND GERMAN 'DEGREE' *well*

cf. Bolinger 1972, Kennedy & McNally 2005 on English

- Available with adjectival participles but not with genuine adjectives:

- (2) a. \*The train is **well** blue / long / beautiful.  
b. \*Der Zug ist **gut** blau / lang / schön.

- Compatible with degree modification  
→ not a true degree modifier:

- (3) very **well** acquainted  
cp. \*{very totally/totally very} red

- ⇒ 'Degree' WELL is not an adjectival degree modifier.
- ⇒ Just like manner WELL, it is a VP modifier (a predicate of events, in the broadest sense).
- ⇒ The (un)availability of the degree reading should be the same in the verbal domain.

### GOAL & RESEARCH QUESTION

- Uniform account of manner and degree WELL as an event predicate in the verbal domain
- What are the precise restrictions on the 'degree' reading of WELL in German (and English)?

## 2. McNally & Kennedy (2013)

(see also Kennedy & McNally 1999, 2005)

### THREE CONDITIONS ON 'DEGREE' *well*

- It requires a **gradable** 'adjective' [= participle].
- It requires a **totally closed** scale:

(4) a. The truck is well / partially loaded.  
b. ??Marge was well / partially worried when she saw the flying pig.
- It requires a **non-maximum standard** (background assumption: 'degree' *well* is a standard booster):

(5) 'DEG' AVAILABLE  
a. They are well acquainted.  
b. The truck is well loaded.

(6) ONLY MANNER  
a. The book is well written.  
b. The hay is well loaded.

### STANDARD WITH DEVERBAL ADJECTIVES

- Determined by the scale structure derived from the underlying event/argument structure
  - What counts as a, e.g., loaded **incremental theme** (loaded-on) can only be such that the maximum standard is met (it is completely loaded). → ONLY MANNER
  - With other arguments (e.g. loaded-with), the standard is not necessarily the maximum (e.g. a truck can also be partially loaded). → 'DEG' is available

### GENERAL IDEA OF THE ANALYSIS

- 'Degree' *well* is a special case of manner *well*; both apply to events.
- It denotes a measure function on events (a relation between events and degrees).
- This measure function is the same as that denoted by the adjective *good* (open scale of goodness).
- The scale structure requirements are built into the lexical semantics of 'degree' *well*.

### 'DEGREE' VS. MANNER

- Participles come with a **telic** and an **agentive quale** (in the sense of Pustejovsky 1995).
  - Manner *well* applies to the event in the agentive quale.
  - 'Degree' *well* applies to the event in the telic quale.
- A state of being **loaded on** some container can only obtain when the loading has been completed.  
→ All result states are identical in degree  
→ no sense to qualify them wrt to goodness scale
- A state of being **loaded with** something can obtain as soon as the smallest loading event has occurred.  
→ Result states of different degrees of loadedness that can be qualified wrt goodness scale

## 3. Improving on McNally & Kennedy

### SHORTCOMINGS OF THEIR ACCOUNT

- The only thing manner and 'degree' *well* have in common: denote properties of events
- BUT**: Building scale structure conditions into the lexical semantics makes a uniform account impossible.

### GERMAN 'DEGREE' *well*: LIKE ENGLISH & SAME RESTRICTIONS IN THE VERBAL DOMAIN (here: adj. vs. verbal passive)

- Totally closed scale 'A's': 'DEG' / MANNER
- (7) a. Die Tür ist/wurde {halb/**gut**} geschlossen.  
the door is/became half/well closed  
b. Der Lastwagen ist/wurde {halb/**gut**} beladen.  
the truck is/became half/well AT-loaded
- Incremental themes: ONLY MANNER
- (8) a. Das Buch ist/wurde **gut** geschrieben.  
the book is/became well written  
b. Das Heu ist/wurde **gut** geladen.  
the hay is/became well loaded

### DOUBTS ABOUT McN&K'S GENERALIZATIONS

- A totally closed scale is not sufficient:

(9) a. Die Tür ist {teilweise/ganz} geöffnet.  
the door is partially/completely opened  
b. Die Tür ist **gut** geöffnet. ONLY MANNER  
the door is well opened
- Incremental theme verbs do not have a result state in their lexical representation (= no telic quale):  
→ An incremental theme can add a scale to measure out the event (cf. Kennedy 2012).

**BUT**: *Well* does not modify the theme but only the participle.

### RESTRICTIONS ON 'DEGREE' READINGS?

- Do we need states / result states / 'target states'?
- Do we need a (potential) lack of agentivity?
- Do we need a high degree of affectedness?

## 3.1 (Result) states

### STATIVE VERBS: AT MOST 'DEGREE'

- (10) a. Sie kennen einander **gut**. ONLY 'DEG'  
they know each other well  
b. Sie passen **gut** zusammen. ONLY 'DEG'  
they fit well together

### A STATIVE COMPONENT IS NOT SUFFICIENT (recall (9))

- ... and this is not due to scale structure:

(11) a. \*Er war **gut** gelangweilt/überrascht.  
he was well bored/surprised  
b. Er war {teilweise/ganz} gelangweilt/überrascht.  
he was partially/completely bored/surprised
- Blocking effect? e.g. *sehr* 'very' *gelangweilt/weit* 'wide' *geöffnet*
- Genuine As? e.g. (11a) is good in Catalan, with intensifying WELL, what would be expected with genuine As; cf. Castroviejo & Gehrke (2015)

## 3.2 (Potential) lack of agentivity

### AGENTIVE VERBS: ONLY MANNER

- (12) a. Er tötet **gut**.  
he kills well  
b. Sie ist **gut** in den Baum geklettert.  
she is well in the.ACC tree climbed
- Partial correlation with restrictions on caus.-inchoative alternation: NB: Siloni t.a.: suppression of a cause
- (13) a. Die Tür schließt sich.  
'The door closes / is closing.'  
b. \*Das Buch schreibt sich.  
Intended: 'The book writes / is writing.'  
c. #Er tötet sich. REFL only: 'kills himself'

### NOT A SUFFICIENT CONDITION

- (14) a. Die Tür öffnet sich.  
'The door opens / is opening.'  
b. Die Tür ist **gut** geöffnet. ONLY MANNER  
the door is well opened

## 3.3 Affectedness

### BEAVERS' (2011) AFFECTEDNESS HIERARCHY

- for all  $x, \phi, e, \exists s[result'(x, s, g_{\phi}, e)]$  (quantized change)  
→  $\exists s \exists g[result'(x, s, g, e)]$  (non-quantized change)  
→  $\exists s \exists \theta[\theta(x, s, e)]$  (potential for change)  
→  $\exists \theta'[\theta'(x, e)]$  (unspecified for change)

### HIGH DEGREE OF AFFECTEDNESS IS NECESSARY

- (Non-)quantized: 'DEG' / MANNER
- (15) a. Die Vase ist/wurde **gut** zersplittert.  
the vase is/became well shattered  
b. Die Hose ist/wurde **gut** gekürzt.  
the trousers is/became well shortened
- Potential for change: ONLY MANNER
- (16) Der Tisch ist/wurde **gut** gewischt.  
the table is well wiped
- Unspecified for change: good degree of V-ability
- (17) a. Die Frau \*ist/wurde (**gut**) gesehen. (\*adj.pass.)  
the woman is/became well seen  
b. Hans hat die Frau **gut** gesehen.  
'John could see the woman well.'

### THIS IS NOT SUFFICIENT

- Agentive verbs of cutting ('non-quantized') and agentive uses of *break* ('quantized'): ONLY MANNER
- (18) a. Das Holz ist/wurde **gut** (durch-)geschnitten.  
the wood is/became well THROUGH-cut  
b. Das Brot ist/wurde **gut** gebrochen.  
the bread is/became well broken

## 4. Towards an account

### UNIFORM TREATMENT AS EVENT PREDICATE

- (19)  $[[well]] = \lambda d. \lambda e[good(e) \geq d]$
- M vs. D: Which (part of the) event gets modified?
    - Restrictions on manner reading: e.g. most statives do not allow manner reading (cf. Katz 2003, 2008; Maienborn 2003, i.a.)
    - Restrictions on 'degree' reading: Different theoretical options

### THE UNDERSPECIFICATION OPTION

- good** accesses either the **big event** or **part of the event**:
- (20) a. The cart is well loaded.  
b.  $\exists e^*, x[subject(x, e^*) \wedge object(the\text{-}cart, e^*) \wedge \exists e[PART\_OF(e, e^*) \wedge load(e) \wedge good(e/e^*)]]$
- cf. Schäfer (2008), who builds on Eckardt (1998): 'big event'  $e^*$ , a complex event consisting of smaller event objects (introduced by PART\_OF-relation)

### SIMILAR ADVs DISCUSSED IN THE LITERATURE

- 'Degree-of-perfection' ADVs (Eckardt 1998, Schäfer 2005)
- 'Resultative' (Geuder 2000) / 'result-oriented' ADVs (Eckardt 2003)

- (21) a. They decorated the room beautifully.  
b. They loaded the cart heavily.

### THE EVENT DECOMPOSITION OPTION

- PRO: German 'deg' WELL only in lower (22a), not in higher position (22b):
- (22) a. ... (dass) Hans den/einen Wagen **gut** belud.  
... (that) Hans the/a carriage well loaded  
b. ... (dass) Hans **gut** den/einen Wagen belud.  
... (that) Hans well the/a carriage loaded  
(cf. Eckardt 2003 for word order restrictions on 'result-oriented' ADVs)
- CON: WELL has to modify the VP as a whole.  
(recall: agentive component cannot be left out)

### THE PREDICATE TRANSFER OPTION

- Geuder (2000): Resultative ADVs as event modifiers
    - Resultant individuals as verb's implicit arguments
    - Predicate transfer: indirect modification of resultant individual
- (23) a. She dressed elegantly. → elegant dress  
b. They loaded the cart heavily. → heavy load
- CON: The 'degree' reading of WELL might not arise in the same environments:
- (24) a. **gut** beladen/verpackt/eingewickelt 'DEG'/MANNER?  
well AT-loaded/PREF-packed/IN-wrapped  
b. **gut** geschmückt/gekleidet ONLY MANNER?  
well decorated/dressed

NB Though the respective paraphrases with nominalizations might still hold.

Selected references: BEAVERS 2011 On affectedness. *NLLT* • CASTROVIEJO & GEHRKE 2015 A GOOD intensifier. *New Frontiers in Artificial Intelligence*, Springer • ECKARDT 2003 Manner adverbs and information structure. *Modifying Adjuncts*, de Gruyter. • GEUDER 2000 *Oriented Adverbs*. Ph.D. Tübingen • KENNEDY 2012 The composition of incremental change. *Telicity, Change, State*, OUP • McNALLY & KENNEDY 2013 Degree vs. manner well. *Advances in Generative Lexicon Theory*, Springer • SCHÄFER 2008 Resolving scope in manner modification. *CSSP 7* • SILONI (T.A.) On the syntactic representation of events. *Handbook on Event Structure*, OUP