

# Preface

 <https://doi.org/10.1075/hcp.62.preface>

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**Aspectuality across Languages: Event construal in speech and gesture**

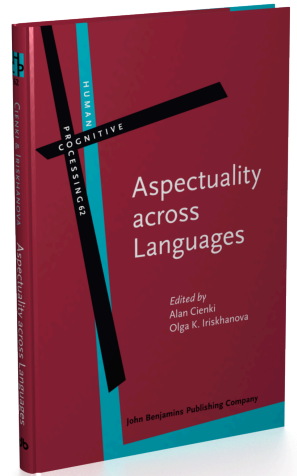
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[*Human Cognitive Processing*, 62] 2018. xviii, 221 pp.

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## Preface

In March 2011, the fifth workshop on Empirical Methods in Cognitive Linguistics (EMCL) was held in Freiburg, Germany (<https://sites.google.com/site/emcl5freiburg/home>). The workshop followed the structure developed through previous EMCLs of having a set of groups running in parallel for one week. Each group was led by two researchers from different fields of study and consisted of a small number of selected students. The goal for each group was to develop, design, carry out, and report on a small, empirical research project on a topic in cognitive linguistics, integrating at least two theoretical and methodological perspectives – often from linguistics and cognitive psychology. The group that was led by Alan Cienki and Raymond Becker developed a project on Aktionsarten, speech, and gesture in English. An initiative to follow up on that research through a larger, cross-linguistic comparison, taking grammatical aspect into consideration, provided the starting point for the development of the project that is reported on in this volume.

A grant from the Russian Science Foundation for international research groups was awarded to Moscow State Linguistic University (A. Cienki, principal investigator) for the research from September 2014 through December 2016. The volume stems from work accomplished during the 2014–15 period of the project, the following year being devoted to a follow-up study on second-language production. The grant supported a productive model of international collaboration involving the team members from France, Germany, and the Netherlands spending a minimum of one month per year in Moscow. This was usually divided up into two visits per year, allowing for intensive periods together of several weeks at a time, with preparatory and follow-up work in the months in between visits coordinated via e-mail and Skype contact. This made it possible to develop ideas over time and to keep them moving ahead through the structure of the regular, intensive group meetings.

This volume presents empirical research but as well brings together reviews of different language-based traditions to the study of aspect (in Chapter 1), some works of which have not been published before in English. The volume was composed not as a set of collected papers, but as a multi-authored work. While maintaining a common parallel structure for presenting the theory and analyses concerning the three languages of study (French, German, and Russian), the chapters were written by teams from the three countries concerned. The book therefore incorporates, to some degree, different language-based approaches to scholarship in general, and to

scholarly writing and argumentation in particular. We feel that this, in itself, is an important element of the volume, giving the readers in English a feel for the different traditions on which the work is based and for the slightly different emphases in linguistic analysis highlighted within each language tradition. We hope that the result will provide an enrichment of Anglo-American approaches to scholarship.

The book not only encompasses three languages but also is multimodal and cross-disciplinary in scope. The research is part of the growing trend in cognitive linguistics to take an audio-visual approach to language use. It incorporates the study of manual gesture as another form of expression, which can give insights into speakers' processes of conceptualization; in our study, we focus on speakers' means of construing events. The work is also cross-disciplinary, bringing together theoretical issues and methodological approaches from linguistics and cognitive psychology, as well as some insights from the study of human physiology and kinesics. In this regard, the book reflects the combination of knowledge and expertise that was part of the research group, in which we all learned from each other. Finally, in chapters with various authors (Chapters 1, 2, 3, and 4), each section title indicates in parentheses the names of the researchers mainly responsible for authoring that section.

Alan Cienki and Olga Iriskhanova