Dynamic Frames in Event Structure

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Frames

Consider:

Gwenn is climbing the ladder.

Gwenn is climbing the CN Tower.

Gwenn is climbing Everest.

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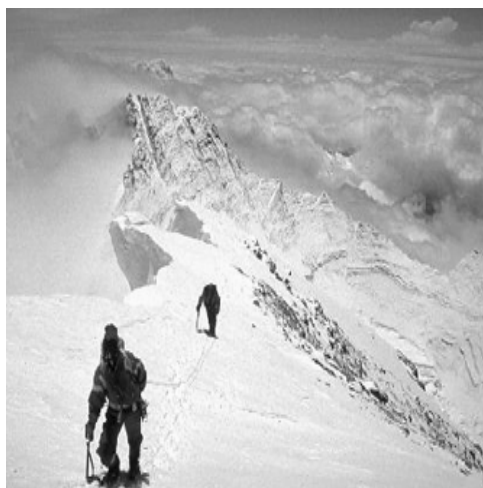
Frames

- A "frame" is the temporal context – the psychological "zoom lens" through which an event is understood to occur

event

frame

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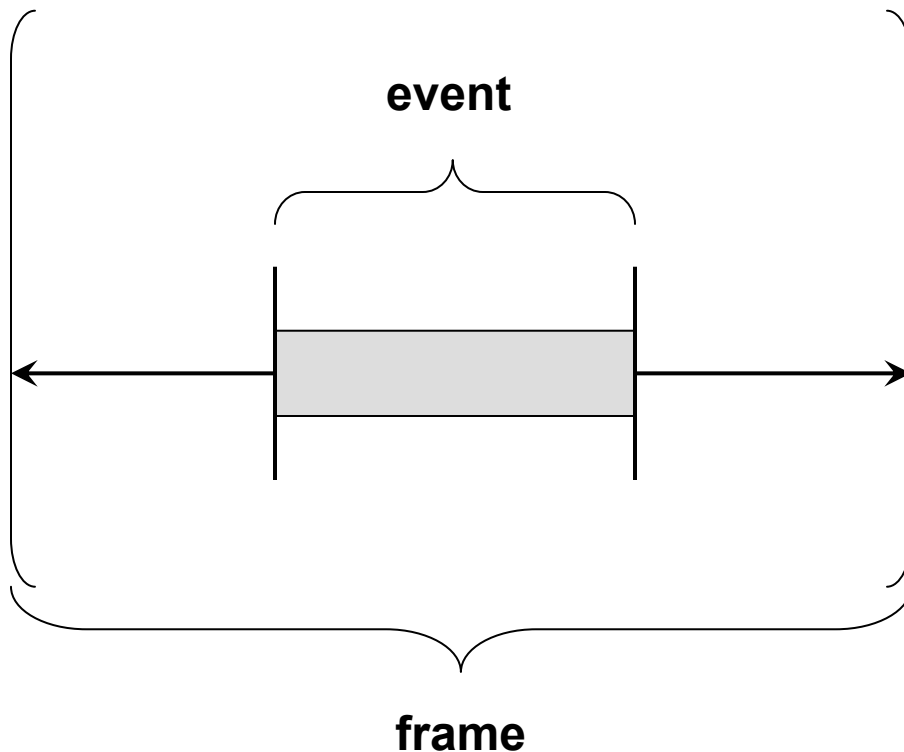
Frames

- indicated by various factors – pragmatics, adverbials, verbal arguments

- utterances with conflicting information are anomalous:

    "Gwenn is climbing Everest on Tuesday."

- can be *manipulated* for the same event; ex. "slow motion"

Human Perception

- We cannot resolve perceptual stimuli to an arbitrary degree of precision

- Visual, auditory, and haptic sensations converge as they become spatially or temporally closer

- Reasonable to believe the same is true of the perception of time and events particularly with regards to *duration* and *punctuality*
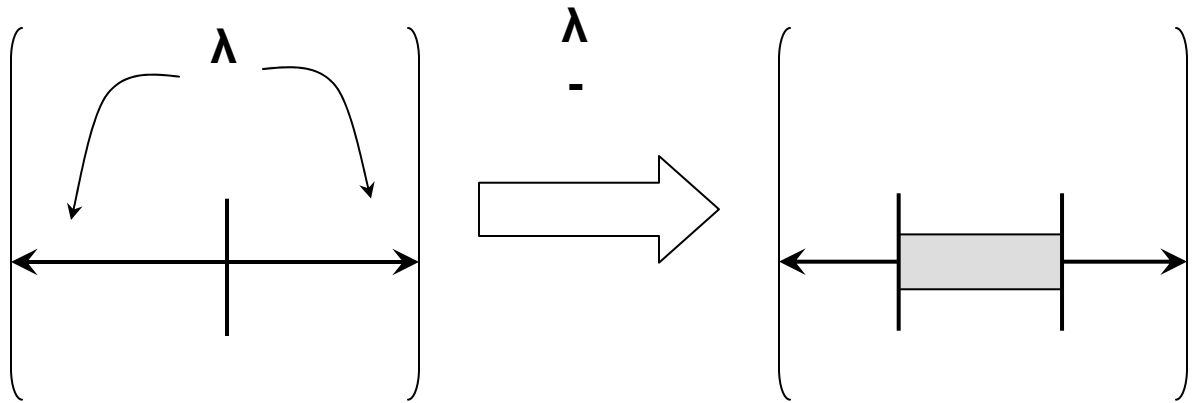
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Dynamic Frames

- Thus, the relationship between frame and event impact how the event is perceived
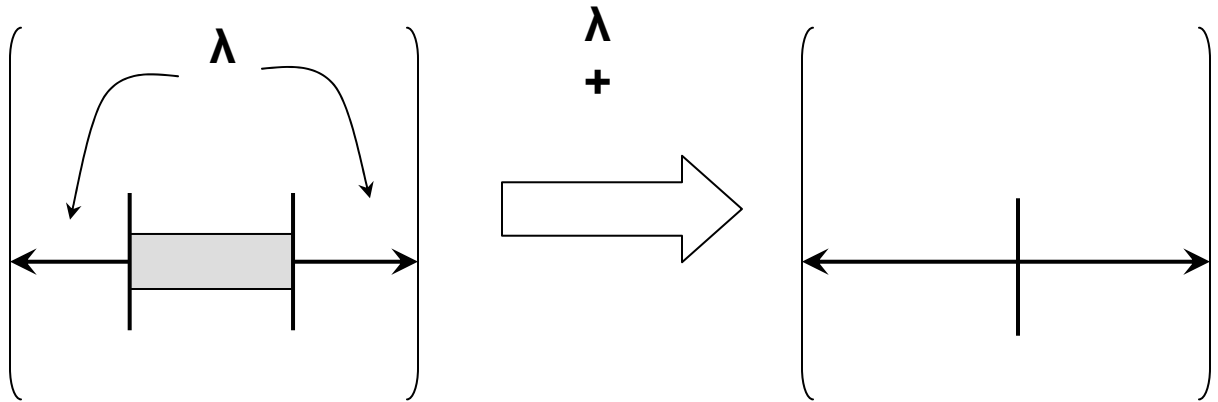
Dilation: As the frame expands, λ increases, the duration of the perceived event decreases – a durative event becomes punctual

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Dynamic Frames

Contraction: As the frame contracts, λ decreases, the duration of the perceived event increases – a punctual event becomes durative

Application: Semelfactives

Vendler's Classification of Verbs:

State:	**Gwenn lives in Nepal.**
Activity:	**Gwenn is running.**
Accomplishment:	**Gwenn ate an apple.**
Achievement:	**Gwenn reached the summit.**

fails to characterize the difference between two types of punctual verbs: achievements (The train is arriving) and semelfactives (Gwenn is knocking on the door).

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Application: Semelfactives

- ## Slow motion "knock"
  - indistinguishable from an accomplishment
  - difference is in relationship of the event to the frame

- ## Habits: "I'm eating apples everyday."
  - dilates frame until "eat an apple" is punctual
  - *be-ing* inherently requires *duration* – unmarked solution in combination with punctuals is iterativity.

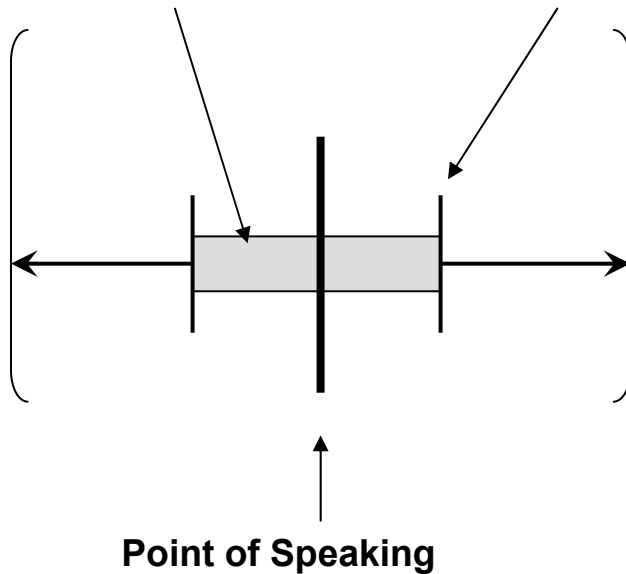**Thus semelfactives are non-prototypical accomplishments; Vendler's system is sufficient.**

Application: Futurate

"The plane is landing."

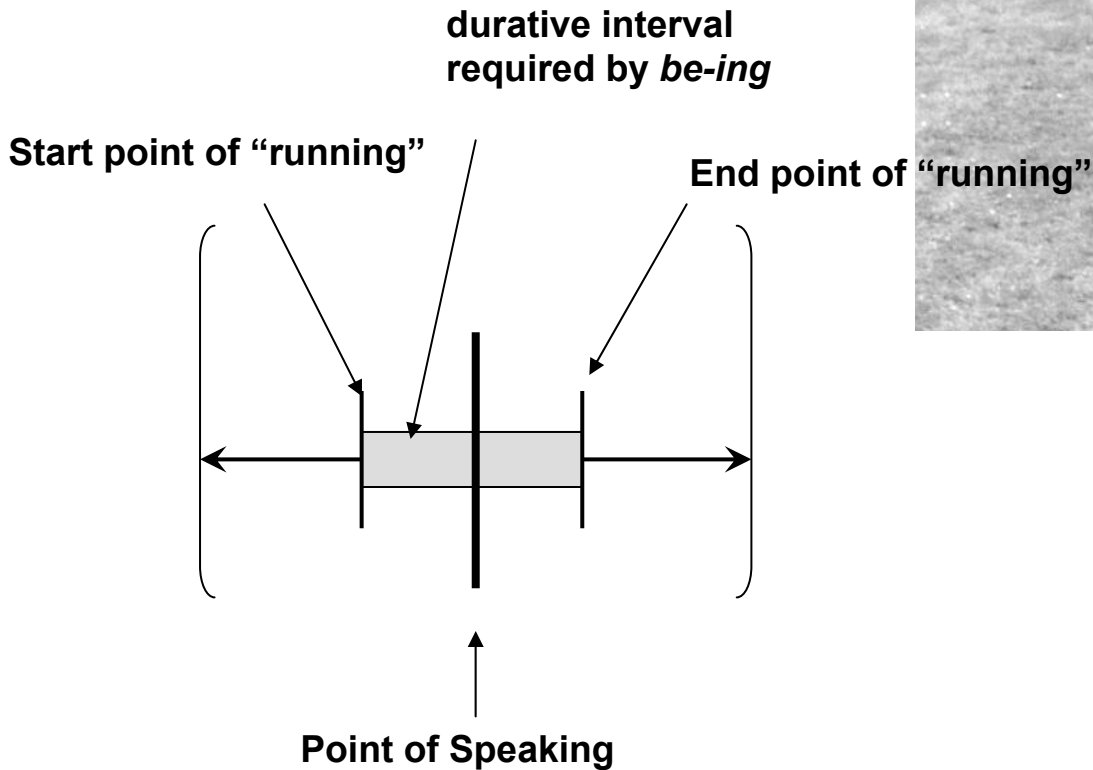**durative interval required by *be-ing***

Event of "landing" (punctual achievement)

Point of Speaking

Prototypical case of achievement + *be-ing*

Application: Futurate

"Gwenn is running (right now)"

durative interval
required by *be-ing*

Start point of "running"

End point of "running"
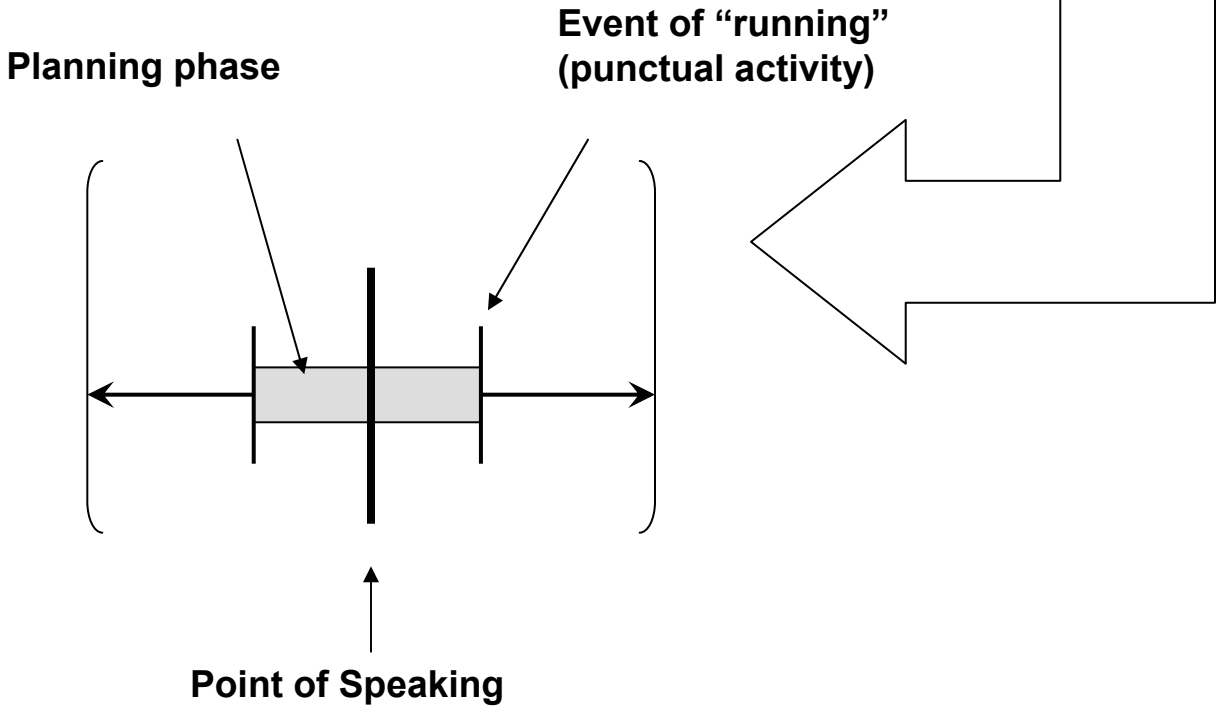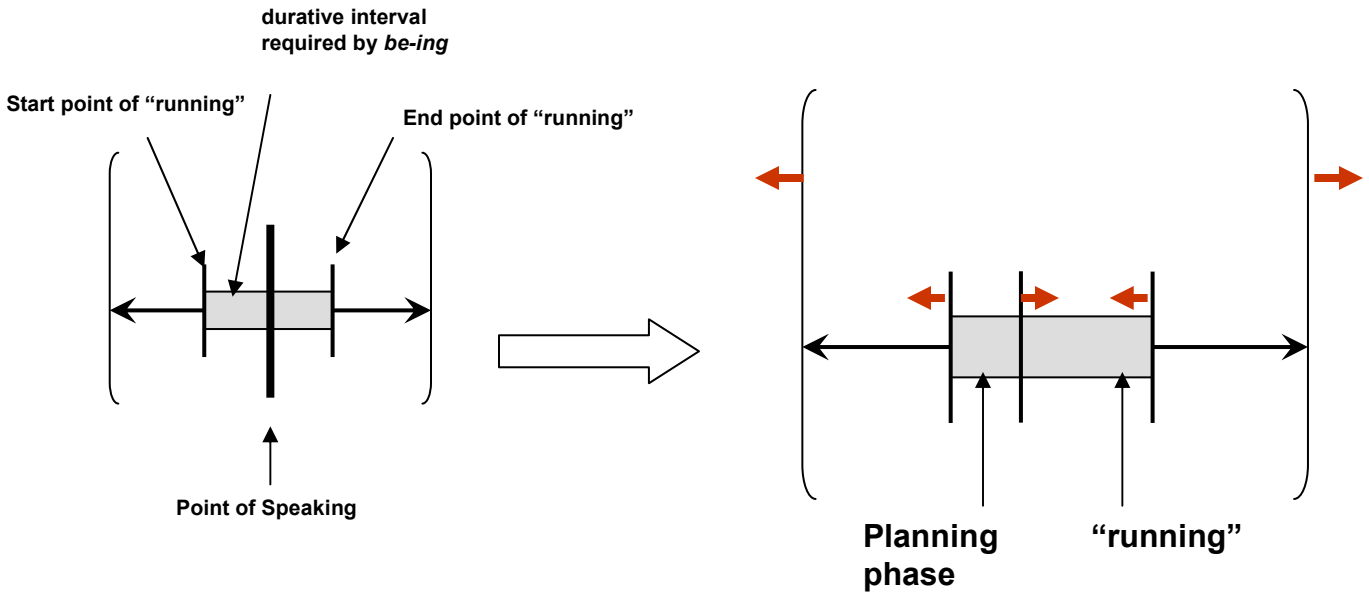
Point of Speaking

Prototypical case of activity/accomplishment + *be-ing*

Application: Futurate

"Gwenn is running tomorrow"

- addition of a "planning phase"
- dilates the frame
- "running" becomes punctual
- new construction looks like achievement + *be-ing*

Application: Futurate

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Conclusion

Drawing on facts of human perception we can introduce the concept of a "dynamic frame" in analyzing event structure.

Doing so allows us to simply characterize at least two non-transparent phenomena in English: semelfactives and the futurate interpretation of *be-ing*.