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## (De)composition of inferential perception verbs and the meaning of *an*

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Perception verbs (PVs) with finite *that*-clauses express an inferring event instead of direct perception. In this use, German PVs allow prepositional phrases that are headed by *an* (engl. roughly 'at') and express the basis of the inference (Diewald & Smirnova 2010, Müller 2020), and therefore bear an evidential interpretation.

- (1) Maria sah an den Möbeln, dass die Bewohner kein Geld haben.  
*Mary saw at the furniture that the residents no money have*

Müller (2020) argues that *an*PPs like in (1) refer to directly perceived entities and claims that PVs in their inferential use yet imply a perception event. Following this, a class of inferential perception verbs (IPVs) can be identified, which involves rather cognitive verbs like *merken* 'notice/'realize' or *erkennen* 'recognize', too. IPVs hence come up with an experiencer that is holder of a mental state and, implicitly, perceiver of a stimulus. The view that a mental state is caused by an underspecified entity is widely accepted. I therefore propose (2a) as decompositional structure of IPVs. An underspecified causer is introduced via a free variable *c*. The postulate in (2b) provides a stimulus as event participant, which will replace *c* on a pragmatic-conceptual level.

- (2) a.  $[[IPV]] = \lambda y \lambda x \lambda e [infer(e) \ \& \ exp(e,x) \ \& \ mental-state(e,y) \ \& \ cause(e,c)]$   
b.  $\forall e [IPV(e) \rightarrow \exists f [stimulus(e,f)]]$

Evidential *an*PPs behave similar to other non-locative *an*PPs in that they are event-internal modifiers and indirectly relate an integral part of the described event to a part of the *an*-referent (cf. Laptieva 2022 for atelic *an*). This follows from Maienborn (2003)'s analysis of event-internal modifiers, and from Carstensen (2000)'s functional approach to the meaning of *an*. In IPV-sentences, the causing stimulus as integral component of the event is conceptualized as part of the *an*-referent. In (1), it is a particular property of the furniture that causes Mary to infer that the residents are poor, and thus gives evidence for her claim.

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