

Participants -II

Ashwini Vaidya

21st Oct 2024

Semantic roles

- **Helen** drove to **the party**
- **He** swatted **the fly** with a **newspaper**
- **The baboon** was asleep **on the roof** **of my car**
- **Joan** drank **the mug of ale**
- **Campbell** saw **the gun** first
- **George** gave **the doorman** a **tip**

List of themes: Agent, Patient, Theme, Experiencer, Beneficiary, Instrument, Goal, Source, Location

Semantic roles

- Agent: Initiator of the action (*David* cooked the omlette)

Semantic roles

- Agent: Initiator of the action (*David* cooked the omlette)
- Patient: Entity undergoing the effect of the action, undergoing a change of state (The sun melted *the ice*)

Semantic roles

- Agent: Initiator of the action (*David* cooked the omlette)
- Patient: Entity undergoing the effect of the action, undergoing a change of state (The sun melted *the ice*)
- Theme: Entity moved by the action/whose location is described: Roberto passed *the ball*

Semantic roles

- Agent: Initiator of the action (*David cooked the omlette*)
- Patient: Entity undergoing the effect of the action, undergoing a change of state (*The sun melted the ice*)
- Theme: Entity moved by the action/whose location is described: *Roberto passed the ball*
- Experiencer: Entity aware of the action/state but not in control of it (*Kevin felt ill*)

Semantic roles

- Agent: Initiator of the action (*David cooked the omlette*)
- Patient: Entity undergoing the effect of the action, undergoing a change of state (*The sun melted the ice*)
- Theme: Entity moved by the action/whose location is described: *Roberto passed the ball*
- Experiencer: Entity aware of the action/state but not in control of it (*Kevin felt ill*)
- Beneficiary: Entity for whose benefit the action was performed (*They baked me a cake*)

Semantic roles

- Agent: Initiator of the action (*David cooked the omlette*)
- Patient: Entity undergoing the effect of the action, undergoing a change of state (*The sun melted the ice*)
- Theme: Entity moved by the action/whose location is described: *Roberto passed the ball*
- Experiencer: Entity aware of the action/state but not in control of it (*Kevin felt ill*)
- Beneficiary: Entity for whose benefit the action was performed (*They baked me a cake*)
- Instrument: Means by which the action comes about (*She signed the document with a pen*)

Semantic roles

- Agent: Initiator of the action (*David cooked the omlette*)
- Patient: Entity undergoing the effect of the action, undergoing a change of state (*The sun melted the ice*)
- Theme: Entity moved by the action/whose location is described: *Roberto passed the ball*
- Experiencer: Entity aware of the action/state but not in control of it (*Kevin felt ill*)
- Beneficiary: Entity for whose benefit the action was performed (*They baked me a cake*)
- Instrument: Means by which the action comes about (*She signed the document with a pen*)
- Location: Where something is situated/takes place: (*The band played in the pub*)

Semantic roles

- Agent: Initiator of the action (*David cooked the omlette*)
- Patient: Entity undergoing the effect of the action, undergoing a change of state (*The sun melted the ice*)
- Theme: Entity moved by the action/whose location is described: *Roberto passed the ball*
- Experiencer: Entity aware of the action/state but not in control of it (*Kevin felt ill*)
- Beneficiary: Entity for whose benefit the action was performed (*They baked me a cake*)
- Instrument: Means by which the action comes about (*She signed the document with a pen*)
- Location: Where something is situated/takes place: (*The band played in the pub*)
- Goal: Entity toward which something moves (*Pat told the joke to her friends*)

Semantic roles

- Agent: Initiator of the action (*David cooked the omlette*)
- Patient: Entity undergoing the effect of the action, undergoing a change of state (*The sun melted the ice*)
- Theme: Entity moved by the action/whose location is described: *Roberto passed the ball*
- Experiencer: Entity aware of the action/state but not in control of it (*Kevin felt ill*)
- Beneficiary: Entity for whose benefit the action was performed (*They baked me a cake*)
- Instrument: Means by which the action comes about (*She signed the document with a pen*)
- Location: Where something is situated/takes place: (*The band played in the pub*)
- Goal: Entity toward which something moves (*Pat told the joke to her friends*)
- Source: Entity from which something moves (*The plane came back from Osaka*)

Semantic roles

- **Helen** drove to **the party** (Agent - Goal)

Semantic roles

- **Helen** drove to **the party** (Agent - Goal)
- **He** swatted **the fly** with **a newspaper** (Agent, Patient, Instrument)

Semantic roles

- **Helen** drove to **the party** (Agent - Goal)
- **He** swatted **the fly** with **a newspaper** (Agent, Patient, Instrument)
- **The baboon** was asleep **on the roof of my car** (Experiencer, Location)

Semantic roles

- **Helen** drove to **the party** (Agent - Goal)
- **He** swatted **the fly** with **a newspaper** (Agent, Patient, Instrument)
- **The baboon** was asleep **on the roof of my car** (Experiencer, Location)
- **Joan** drank **the mug of ale** (Agent - Patient)

Semantic roles

- **Helen** drove to **the party** (Agent - Goal)
- **He** swatted **the fly** with **a newspaper** (Agent, Patient, Instrument)
- **The baboon** was asleep **on the roof of my car** (Experiencer, Location)
- **Joan** drank **the mug of ale** (Agent - Patient)
- **Campbell** saw **the gun** first (Experiencer - Theme)

Semantic roles

- **Helen** drove to **the party** (Agent - Goal)
- **He** swatted **the fly** with **a newspaper** (Agent, Patient, Instrument)
- **The baboon** was asleep **on the roof of my car** (Experiencer, Location)
- **Joan** drank **the mug of ale** (Agent - Patient)
- **Campbell** saw **the gun** first (Experiencer - Theme)
- **George** gave **the doorman a tip** (Agent, Beneficiary, Theme)

- In the following sentence: *The police saw the robbers leaving the bank*, the police are *experiencers*
- Can you think of sentences which have as their subjects the following:-
 - ▶ Agent
 - ▶ Patient
 - ▶ Theme
 - ▶ Recipient
 - ▶ Instrument

Some possibilities:-

- John hit Peter

Some possibilities:-

- John hit Peter
- The bowl cracked

Some possibilities:-

- John hit Peter
- The bowl cracked
- The arrow flew through the air/ The glass fell

Some possibilities:-

- John hit Peter
- The bowl cracked
- The arrow flew through the air/ The glass fell
- She received a demand for unpaid tax

Some possibilities:-

- John hit Peter
- The bowl cracked
- The arrow flew through the air/ The glass fell
- She received a demand for unpaid tax
- The key opened the lock

Thematic role grid

- Associated with each verb is some grammatical information: is it transitive/intransitive/ditransitive
- But also associated with each verb is knowledge of semantic roles
- We can associate each verb with a thematic role grid

put V: < AGENT, THEME, LOCATION >

This shows us that put is a three argument verb associated with certain thematic roles

All of these roles are required— hence it's not possible to say **John put the book*

We have to say *John put the book on the table*

- On the other hand, it's possible to say *John read the book*:- because the theta grid for *read* has only two **participant roles**

Participant roles and Non-participant roles

- Participant roles correspond to grammatical arguments: they are needed by the verb and must be obligatorily present

Participant roles and Non-participant roles

- Participant roles correspond to grammatical arguments: they are needed by the verb and must be obligatorily present
- Non-participant roles are optional: they provide information about time, location, purpose or result of the event

Participant roles and Non-participant roles

- Participant roles correspond to grammatical arguments: they are needed by the verb and must be obligatorily present
- Non-participant roles are optional: they provide information about time, location, purpose or result of the event
- For the purposes of the thematic role grids, only participant roles are relevant

Participant roles and Non-participant roles

- Participant roles correspond to grammatical arguments: they are needed by the verb and must be obligatorily present
- Non-participant roles are optional: they provide information about time, location, purpose or result of the event
- For the purposes of the thematic role grids, only participant roles are relevant

Verbs that share common thematic grids can form classes:

E.g verbs of Transfer in English will contain examples like *give, lend, supply, pay, donate, contribute*

Here, transfer is encoded from the perspective of the AGENT

V: < AGENT, THEME, RECIPIENT >

Barbara loaned money to Michael

- Another class of Transfer verbs will encode the transfer from the perspective of the RECIPIENT
- V: <RECIPIENT, THEME, SOURCE>
- Michael borrowed the money from Barbara
- Examples of this type include:

- Another class of Transfer verbs will encode the transfer from the perspective of the RECIPIENT
- V: <RECIPIENT, THEME, SOURCE>
- Michael borrowed the money from Barbara
- Examples of this type include: receive, accept, buy, purchase, rent, hire

Voice

- Flexibility in semantic roles is offered by using the *passive voice*
 - ▶ Billy fed the horses (Active)
 - ▶ The horses were fed by Billy (Passive)

CITY HALL DAMAGED BY STORMS

Voice

- Flexibility in semantic roles is offered by using the *passive voice*
 - ▶ Billy fed the horses (Active)
 - ▶ The horses were fed by Billy (Passive)

CITY HALL DAMAGED BY STORMS

- ▶ In the sentence above, we have a *past participle* 'damaged', and the sentence is passive
- ▶ However, the headline writer has chosen to omit the verb 'be'
- ▶ Newspaper headlines allow passive forms to be written this way: however in most other contexts, passive form would be *City hall was damaged by storms*
- ▶ To form the passive, we need both the participial form of the verb and the auxiliary (most commonly *be*) which provides tense information e.g. *City hall is damaged by storms* or *City hall was damaged by storms*

- In the active sentence, Billy is the AGENT and the subject, whereas horses is the PATIENT and object
- In the passive version, the PATIENT is the subject and the AGENT occurs as part of the prepositional phrase *by Billy*
- The passive sentence allows the speaker to describe the situation from the point of view of the PATIENT
 - ▶ Billy fed the horses (Active)
 - ▶ The horses were fed by Billy (Passive)
- A passive voice may be used to obscure the identity of the AGENT

- I was allowed to believe things that weren't true



Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene expresses some regret about QAnon, other conspiracy claims

Source: Language Log

- An agent may be so far backgrounded that it becomes an implied participant
- *The horses were fed*
- The foregrounding of the patient and demotion of the agent alters the perspective for the listener
- This choice of passive depends on what the speaker believes is more salient in the conversation

Demotion of object

- Passives also allow the foregrounding of roles other than PATIENT

Demotion of object

- Passives also allow the foregrounding of roles other than PATIENT
- The following examples allow THEME, RECIPIENT roles as subjects of passives:-

Demotion of object

- Passives also allow the foregrounding of roles other than PATIENT
- The following examples allow THEME, RECIPIENT roles as subjects of passives:-
 - ▶ **This money** was donated to the school (Theme)

Demotion of object

- Passives also allow the foregrounding of roles other than PATIENT
- The following examples allow THEME, RECIPIENT roles as subjects of passives:-
 - ▶ **This money** was donated to the school (Theme)
 - ▶ **He** was given a camera by his grandmother

Demotion of object

- Passives also allow the foregrounding of roles other than PATIENT
- The following examples allow THEME, RECIPIENT roles as subjects of passives:-
 - ▶ **This money** was donated to the school (Theme)
 - ▶ **He** was given a camera by his grandmother
- Compare these to their active counterparts

Demotion of object

- Passives also allow the foregrounding of roles other than PATIENT
- The following examples allow THEME, RECIPIENT roles as subjects of passives:-
 - ▶ **This money** was donated to the school (Theme)
 - ▶ **He** was given a camera by his grandmother
- Compare these to their active counterparts
 - ▶ Someone donated this money to the school

Demotion of object

- Passives also allow the foregrounding of roles other than PATIENT
- The following examples allow THEME, RECIPIENT roles as subjects of passives:-
 - ▶ **This money** was donated to the school (Theme)
 - ▶ **He** was given a camera by his grandmother
- Compare these to their active counterparts
 - ▶ Someone donated this money to the school
 - ▶ His grandmother gave him a camera

- However, the general pattern is that the grammatical *object* is always made the subject
- The recipient in the example below (*her*) is an indirect object, whereas *garage* is a direct object
- John built a garage for her
- *For her was built a garage by John
- A garage was built for her by John
- We can also see this in the example
- He opened the door with this key
- *With this key was opened the door by him

- In the following sentences is the rule followed?

Passivize the following:

- ① He loaded hay on to the tractor
- ② He loaded the tractor with hay

- In the following sentences is the rule followed?

Passivize the following:

- ① He loaded hay on to the tractor
 - ② He loaded the tractor with hay
- *The tractor was loaded hay on by him

- In the following sentences is the rule followed?

Passivize the following:

- ① He loaded hay on to the tractor
- ② He loaded the tractor with hay
- *The tractor was loaded hay on by him
- The hay was loaded on the tractor by him

- In the following sentences is the rule followed?

Passivize the following:

- ① He loaded hay on to the tractor
 - ② He loaded the tractor with hay
-
- *The tractor was loaded hay on by him
 - The hay was loaded on the tractor by him
 - Only objects can be usefully passivized

- English is also considered to have passives formed with verbs other than *be*
 - ▶ be-passive: Mary was shot on purpose
 - ▶ Mary got *shot on purpose*
 - ▶ I had this *worked on* by a carpenter