
Linguistics Seminar 3

1. EXAM QUESTION. Label the functions in the following sentences.

- a) Yesterday afternoon Janet sold her beautiful old house to the mysterious couple

Yesterday afternoon Janet sold her beautiful old house to the mysterious couple

A	S	V	Od	Oi
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- b) On arrival they realised the true nature of their mistake

On arrival they realised the true nature of their mistake

A	S	V	Od
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- c) Sweets will be given to all those with perfect marks

Sweets will be given to all those with perfect marks

S	V	Oi
---	---	----

- d) The crushing machine crushed the old car into pieces

The crushing machine crushed the old car into pieces

S	V	Od	Co
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- e) She seems a bit unhappy since the accident

She seems a bit unhappy since the accident

S	V	Cs	A
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- f) As special treat the teacher allowed the students an extra long lunch break

As special treat the teacher allowed the students an extra long lunch break

A	S	V	Oi	Od
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2. EXAM QUESTION. For each of the verbs below, (a) specify all possible argument structures, e.g. AGENT + VERB + PATIENT, and (b) give example sentences.

NB the table overleaf shows the most common argument structures, but is not exhaustive

Here is an example:

tell →

AG + V + TH: She told a story

AG + V + PAT + BEN: She told her friend a story / she told a story to her friend.

1. spend

AG + V + PAT: She spent the money

She spent the money on clothes = possibly theme? but this doesn't match any of the thematic relations well.

She spent the money on her friend = could be described as a benefactive, but arguably not an essential participant and therefore not an argument.

2. borrow

AG + V + PAT: He borrowed the book

AG + V + PAT + BEN: He borrowed the book from his friend

(NB label 'Benefactive' is odd here, as the friend does not receive the books. However, the role is very similar to its role in the sentence *He gave the book to his friend*, with the proviso that movement is away from *the friend* rather than towards him/her. Some thematic role schemes have a 'source' argument to describe this role.)

3. deliver

AG + V + PAT: He delivered the book AG + V + PAT + BEN: He delivered the book to the library.

NB the library could also be conceptualised as a location (i.e. LOCATIVE) rather than an entity which receives the book.

4. punish

AG + V + EXP: She punished the child

The role of child is quite difficult. An essential condition of punishment is that the animate entity that you are punishing (human/animal) experiences the punishment. Therefore the child is best classed as an Experiencer.

5. fold

AG + V + PAT: She folded the paper

PAT + V: The company folded

6. reveal

AG + V + TH: He revealed the solution

AG + V + TH + BEN: He revealed the solution to the audience

NB Theme is better than Patient, as we can't say 'what happened to the solution is that it was revealed,' i.e. it is not directly affected by the revealing.

7. christen

AG + VERB + PAT/TH: He christened the child

AG + VERB + PAT/TH + ATTR: He christened the child Peter

Whether we view the child as the Patient or Theme depends on the extent to which we view them as affected by the event.

8. take

AG + VERB + PAT He took the wallet

AG + VERB + PAT + BEN: He took the wallet to/from the woman (NB 'benefactive' is the closest role, but with the preposition 'from', the movement is **away** from the woman) AG + VERB + PAT + LOC: She took the car to work.

9. plaster

AG + V + PAT: The decorator plastered the wall

AG + V + PAT + INS: The decorator plastered the wall with paint

NB the wall is definitely the Patient, but the role of 'paint' is quite difficult to label. AG + V + PAT + LOC: The decorator plastered the paint onto the wall

10. surprise

TH + V + EXP: The news surprised me

This is quite straightforward.

Agent first	Theme first	Experiencer first	Patient first
(1) AG + V He jumped	(9) EXP + V He's suffering	(13) TH + V + EXP He scared me	(14) PAT + V the building collapsed
(2) AG + V + PAT She hit the mugger	(10) EXP + V + TH She saw the accident		
(3) AG + V + TH He reviewed the offer	(11) EXP + V + TH + ATTR I consider him a genius		
(4) AG + V + PAT + ATTR He hammered the nail flat	(12) EXP + V + ATTR I feel tired		
(5) AG + V + PAT + BEN She gave a sweet to her friend			
(6) AG + V + PAT + INSTR She covered the wall with paint			
(7) AG + V + PAT + LOC He took the money from the wallet			
(8) AG + V + TH + BEN He told the story to the man			
(8) AG + V + LOC He went home			