Lexical Semantics
Assignment 4

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Due by: 2pm on December 10, 2019.
Note: You have two weeks for this assignment. Question 3 requires you to do a bit more work in terms of coming up with your own data, so it might take you longer than some of the questions on previous assignments.

You can submit your assignment by email to `prerna.nadathur@phil.hhu.de`, hand it in in class next week, or turn in a paper copy to the Lexical Semantics box in the Linguistics department office (24.53.00.86). Let me know in advance if you will need to complete assignments in German.

Reminders:

- Typed assignments are strongly preferred, unless you have very neat handwriting
- You may work with one another or consult additional resources in completing the assignment, but remember to cite your sources, and to write up your answers alone.
- You will NOT be penalised for mistakes related to English grammar
- You may ask questions about the homework in class on November 5. You can also email me, or request a time for office hours.

You should attempt to answer all three questions.

Question 1: Identifying implications

Spell out three implications for each of the following sentences. For each implication specify what kind of implication it is (entailment, presupposition, or Gricean implicature), and give a brief justification for your classification. Your justification should also include which words, morphemes, or phrases in the sentence are responsible for each of the implications.

(1) Some politicians failed to meet with their constituents.[1]

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[1]The word *constituent* in this context refers to a member or a resident of an area which elects someone to a government or parliamentary position. *Wähler* is probably a reasonable loose translation.

(2) Many of the trees on campus have already lost their leaves.

(3) Pierre managed to apologize for having a noisy party.

(4) Pierre blamed the loud music on his neighbors.

Question 2: Another verb alternation

The (a) and (b) sentences in the following examples seem to have the same meaning.

(5)   a. Claire spread jam on the bread.
      b. Claire spread the bread with jam.

(6)   a. Tom sprinkled cinnamon on the scones.
      b. Tom sprinkled the scones with cinnamon.

(a) Explain why the *with* phrase in the preceding examples does not introduce an instrument. Your argument should make reference to how instrument roles are defined, as well as the sentences in (7):

   (7)   a. Claire spread the bread with jam with a knife.
         b. Tom sprinkled the scones with cinnamon using a sieve.

(b) What are the thematic roles of each of the arguments in each of the (a) and (b) sentences in (5)-(6)? Discuss whether the assignments you have suggested support the intuition that the (a) and (b) sentences have the same meaning or not. [Note: if the thematic role assignments you give for (5) and (6) are not the same – that is, if you don't assign the same roles in (5)a and (6)a, and then in (5)b and (6)b – you should also explain why you think *spread* and *sprinkled* involve different thematic roles.]

Question 3: Grammatical functions

We've seen that more than one semantic role can correspond to a single grammatical function (subject, object). This question explores how free the relationship between semantic roles and grammatical functions can be. You can use either English or German data, but you should stick to only one language, and specify which language you are looking at.

(a) Consider sentences with the following structure:

   (8)   NP-subject Verb (NP-object) PP*

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[The parenthesis around *NP-object* mean that this component is optional. The *
next to *PP* means that you can have any number of prepositional phrases, including
none at all. Assume that PPs are of different types according to the preposition
which introduces them – e.g. *with Claire* is a *with*-PP, but *to California* is a *to*-PP.]

Given the semantic roles we discussed in class, investigate which roles can occur
as the NP-subject, which ones as NP-object, and which ones as various PPs. To
do this, you need to come up with examples using various different verbs. Some
of the verbs you might consider are *bake, break, escape, go, fear, fly, frighten, hit,
leave, send, receive, wipe* (or their German translations), but you can look at any
verbs you like, as long as they fit in the structure in (8). You should ignore passive
sentences, and if you are using German, try to avoid both reflexive verbs and those
with separable prefixes.

(b) In addition, now consider sentences with the following structure:

(9)   NP-subject Verb NP-object NP-object2

and investigate which verbs take this pattern and how the semantic roles line up
with them. Some of the relevant verbs are in the list above, but you might want
to consider verbs like *give* and *lend*. If you're using German examples, avoid using
pronouns for any of your NPs, as this introduces additional confusion with respect
to word order.

(c) Based on your findings, discuss whether there are restrictions on the correspondence
between semantic roles and grammatical functions. Are the restrictions the same
for all grammatical functions, and for all of the verbs that you looked at?