2 Lexical Semantic Representations

- **Idiosyncrasy vs. Regularity:** Traditional thematic role were course grained and did not capture the subtle idiosyncrasies, nor were they really clearly defined in a way that connected

2.2 Event Decompositions

- A dominant alternative is that the grammatically relevant bits of verb meaning relate to events

(17) **[BECOME ϕ] is true at I iff (1) there is an interval J containing the initial bound of I such that $\neg\phi$ is true at J, (2) there is an interval K containing the final bound of I such that ϕ is true at K, and (3) there is no non-empty interval I' such that $I' \subset I$ and conditions (1) and (2) hold for I' as well as I.** **(Dowty 1979:141,(11'))**

- **But what's the link to syntax? Well, syntactic prominence seems to follows event structure:**

(18) **a.**
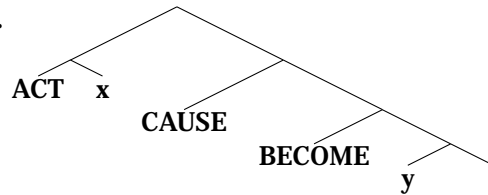
3   A Case Study in Argument/Oblique Alternations

- Some things can't be explained by any of the above, but do point to another notion of semantic structure: *structur   contrasts n   an n*, such as relative vagueness/specificity (drawing Beavers 2005, 2006, 2010, 2011; see also Ackerman and Moore 2001, Grimm 2005, 2011).

- A key case study are **object/oblique alternations**, where an arugment can appear (in English) as an object or PP, like the locative alternation (Fillmore 1968, Anderson 1971, Rappaport and Levin 1988, Dowty 1991, Gropen et al. 1991, Beavers 2005, 2006, 2010, 2017):

(20)   a.   Alice loaded **the hay** *onto t   wa on*.
       bl86(a)2.3505(l)-3ice loaded

4 Truth Conditional Strength as Semantic Structure

- But there's a way out. An observation dating back Anderson (1971) is that whichever argument is object is interpreted as completely moved/changed (with the caveat that what counts as "completely" is fuzzy and contextually determined; see also Dowty 1991, Beavers 2010):

  (27) a. Kim loaded t *ay* onto the wagon, #but still needed a truck for all the rest.
        b. Kim loaded t *wa on* with the hay, #and still had extra room for the grain.

- Conversely, whichever argument is realized as a PP doesn't have to be completely moved/changed — any amount of change is fine:

  (28) a. Kim loaded the wagon *w t t   ay*, but still needed a truck for the rest.
        b. Kim loaded the wagon *w t t   ay*, leaving none behind.
  (29) a. Kim loaded the hay *onto t   wa on*, and still had extra room for the grain.
        b. Kim loaded the hay *onto t   wa on*, filling it up completely.

- But it does have to be at least *a## # #l b t* moved/changed:

  (30) a. Kim loaded the hay *onto t   wa on*

5 Case-marking in Sinhala: Semantic Generality and Blocking

- A second case study in how meanings are structured without appeal to semantic representations concerns a concept I mentioned last time, namely transitivity, i.e. what semantic pat-

(41)   a. *An̪ə̂r   atiŋ/An̪ə̂r -ge   atiŋ*
                Andare POST/**Andare**-GEN POST

(44) a. genitive+atiN - **involuntary causer using their hands**

b. nominative+atiN - **involuntary causer not using their hands**

c. dative - **involuntary actors, performers, experiencers, or recipients**

d. accusative - **patient acted upon by someone or something else**

e. nominative - **patient not acted on by someone or something else**

- **But these roles are not all distinct from one another, and some arguments may be covered by two rules. Yet that doesn't (always) yield complete variability in case.**

- **For example, any causer using their hands is an actor. Yet the following all take genitive+atiN but not dative, suggesting dative does *not* indicate involuntary actors** *n   n r#l*:

(45) *at u   nn@* '**sweep**', *at@   nn@* '**touch**',   *nn@* '**rub**',   *nn@* '**hit**',   *#l nn@* '**hurl**',   *n nn@* '**poke**', *#l n- @raa* '**slap**', *luw@-   nn@* '**pester**', *w s - @raa* '**throw**'

- **Yet some verbs do allow the alternation, albeit with subtle semantic differences:**

(46) *An @r   atiN/An @r -t@   w#l   aw n@wa*
Andare POST/Andare-DAT sand eat.INV.NPST

a. atiN = **'Andare is doing something and accidentally eats sand.'**

b. dative = **'Andare accidentally eats sand.'**

- **The problem is the disjunctive analysis of dative in (44): what do these roles have in common? Beavers and Zubair (2014) suggested it is not being the ultimate cause of the event (cf. Butt 2006). When dative is possible for the subject, this is always the reading:**

(47) a. *Anu n tuwa   t awuruwat yaa-w@ n t uw   n*
Anu dance.VOL.PST but nobody   3SG-ACC dance.CAUS.VOL.PST.EMPH NEG

'**Anu danced, but nobody made her dance.**'   *I s #l   t son on t ra o*

b. *Anu-t@   n tuna   # t awuruwat yaa-w@ n t uw   n*
Anu-DAT dance.INV.PST   but nobody   3SG-ACC dance.CAUS.VOL.PST.EMPH NEG

'**Anu danced, but nobody made her dance.**'   *I s   was poss ss   by a sp r t*

(48) a. *Anu #l uwa   t awuruwat yaa-w@ #l uw   n*
Anu shake.VOL.PST but nobody   3SG-ACC shake.CAUS.VOL.PST.EMPH NEG

'**Anu shook, but nobody shook her/made her shake.**'   *I t was c@l outs*

b. *Anu-t@   #l una   # t awuruwat yaa-w@ #l uw   n*
Anu-DAT shake.INV.PST   but nobody   3SG-ACC shake.CAUS.VOL.PST.EMPH NEG

'**Anu shook, but nobody shook her.**'   *)Yebe*

- **Yes, but accusative is** *str ctly narrow r*

6 But Wait, is There Still Structure There?

- **The two case studies above have suggested that maybe truth conditional semantics — which includes notions of specificity, vagueness, and implication — creates semantic structure without needing to posit it representationally.**

6.2 Argument Structure Conditioned by Thematic Role Hierarchies After All

- I was down on traditional thematic hierarchies, but I'm not sure we can dismiss them entirely. Everdell (2023) looked at applicatives — morphemes that add objects to verbs — in O'dam (an Uto-Aztecan language spoken in Durango, Mexico) and found an interesting pattern.

#1 **For intransitive verbs the applicative adds a causer subject, making the old subject the object:**

(56) a. *Tɨsdha-'*   *u ñ*   *a oox na ñ*   *pa*   *bopoo*
          go.up-IRR DET=1SG.POSS dog   SUB=1SG.SBJ where bed

          'My dog is going to up onto my bed'

      b. *Añ*   *tɨsa'ñ-dha-'*   *u ñ*   *a oox na ñ*   *pa*   *bopoo*
          1SG.SBJ go.up-APPL-IRR DET=1SG.POSS dog   SUB=1SG.SBJ where bed

          'I'm going to put my dog up on my bed'

#3 **Conversley, if the verb is transitive *an* it has as part of its meaning an implicit, unexpressed paricipant, then applicativization adds a new object expressing that participant:**

(57) a. *Maa n-n* *ya*   *tˈlb a*   *aa n* *u* *naabat* *a p* *o* *c a*
          one-time   DIR.PROX pass.night.PFV one   DET mestizo DIR doubt NEG

          b a   c
          good=1PL.

(64)　　*ɡno **ber-** an an*
　　　　　Tono MV-dress
　　　　　'Tono dressed.' (or 'Tono was dressed (by someone)')

- **Natural reciprocals** indicate a reciprocal relationship, i.e. a mutual relation between two distinct entities (Ogloblin and Nedjalkov 2007) (but non-reciprocal is OK, too):

(65)　　*A r an Yusu **ber-**sa abat*
　　　　　Amir and Yusuf MV-friend
　　　　　'Amir and Yusuf are friends.' (or 'Amir and Yusuf have friends')

- **Relational noun** middles form from body part, kin term, and clothing nouns (Nichols 1988, Chappell and McGregor 1996, Tsunoda 1996) and produce a poss

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