

Argument Structure and Experiencer Verbs in English

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Among the various types of verbs, I investigate the characteristics of the argument structure of Experiencer verbs and their derived nominals in comparison with those of Agentive verbs and nominals. This thesis probes into the relation between the argument structure and the corresponding syntactic structure.

While Agent is uniformly the external argument within the class of Agentive verbs, it cannot be uniformly determined within the members of Experiencer verbs which argument is linked to the external position at S-structure. That is, the amuse-class(1a) has "the content or object of the mental state" in the subject position, whereas the enjoy-class(1b) has "the person(s) experiencing the mental state" in that position.

(1) a. The new toys amused the child for hours. (bother/frighten/worry etc.)

b. The students enjoyed the lecture very much. (fear/hate/respect etc.)

As a principle guiding the shaping of D-structures on the basis of substantive thematic information in lexical entries, I assume the following Mapping Principle, which encodes intrinsic thematic prominence into configurational prominence in an isomorphic way.

(2) Syntactic configurations projected from a given θ -grid should reflect the thematic hierarchy (i.e. AG > EXP > S, G, L > TH), so that for every pair of θ -roles in the grid, the higher role in the hierarchy is projected onto a higher structural position.

Having surveyed the previous studies on the argument structure of Experiencer verbs, I found that analyses diverge on whether "the content or object of the mental state" (ex. the new toys in (1a) and the lecture in (1b)) or "the person(s) experiencing the mental state" (ex. the child in (1a) and the students in (1b)) should be labeled as Theme. The former analysis postulates the θ -grid[EXP, TH] and the latter the [TH, S]. The validity of the former analysis is evidenced by the Binding phenomena and by the thematic restriction imposed by of. An apparent problem is the alleged grammatical contrast between *the movie's amusement and Bill's amusement. Given the θ -grid [EXP, TH], the way of thematic linking in these nominals suggests that the [TH, S] is the correct θ -grid if we keep the Theme Requirement (which states that [TH] must be first realised in a syntactic position while other θ -roles cannot appear without [TH] being realized) as a principle of grammar. This puzzle about the argument structure is resolved and

the former analysis is found to be the right one when we reinterpret the data of nominals as (3-4) in terms of process/result distinction. Note that the following judgements are given to those of process nominals consistently.

- (3) a. Bill's amusement at the movie
 b. *the movie's amusement
 c. *Bill's amusement
 d. *the amusement at the movie
 e. *the amusement of Bill
- (4) a. Nancy's enjoyment of the travel
 b. *the travel's enjoyment
 c. *Nancy's enjoyment
 d. *the enjoyment of the travel
 e. *the enjoyment of Nancy

As a result of this reinterpretation, the Theme Requirement came to be the invalid principle for explaining the way of linking in nominals. Then I took notice of the internal/external status of arguments instead of the labels of θ -roles carried by arguments. From this perspective, I proposed the following Condition on Argument Linking to account for the paradigm (3-4).

- (5) (i) An internal argument must be linked (i.e. mapped onto a structural position at D-structure) and
 (ii) an external argument must be linked in the case of verbs, but it may be linked optionally in the case of their derived process nominals.

Though the Theme Requirement can handle only the nominals derived from Agentive verbs taking one internal argument, the condition (5) can handle not only the nominals derived from Agentive verbs taking one internal argument but also those derived from Agentive verbs taking two internal argument such as (6) and those derived from Experiencer verbs such as (3-4) in an uniform way.

- (6) a. *Bill's presentation of a ring
 b. Bill's presentation of a ring to Nancy
 c. the presentation of a ring to Nancy

I also point out that both of the two arguments of Experiencer verbs and their nominals are internal arguments, based on the parallelism between two classes of Experiencer nominals demonstrated as in (3-4). Thus I succeeded in contending that the Mapping Principle (2) and the Condition on Argument Linking (5) has a significant regularity to capture across the verbs and their derived nominals.