

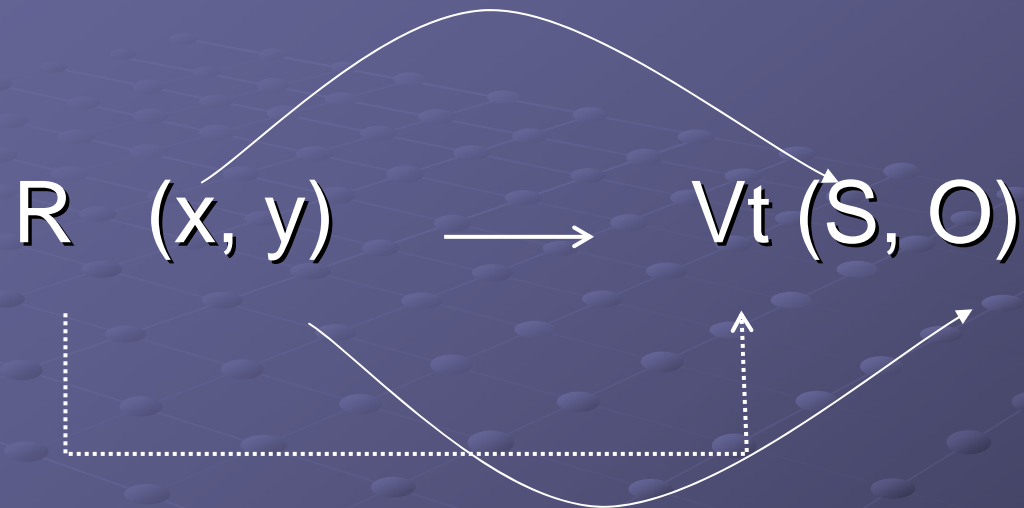
How Cognitive/Discourse Factors Can Influence Argument Realisation: A Case of Object Omission

Kensei Sugayama
Kyoto Prefectural University
Kyoto 606-8522, Japan
e-mail: ken@kpu.ac.jp

1. Introduction

- (1) Has she taken her medicine? - *She has taken.
- Halliday & Hasan
- (2) In the context where it is perfectly clear that a particular door is in question.
*Did you lock? – Fillmore
- (3) *I'll open an account if you'll open. – CGEL
- (4) *I'll murder.- Kilby
- (5) The tiger killed *(someone).
- (6) Chris broke *(something).
- (7) The heat melted *(the snow).

(8)



(9) Recoverability

a. They played the club championship and *won.* – *CambGEL*

b. Have you *eaten yet?* - *ibid.*

2. A Lexical-Semantic Analysis

(10) Lexical Semantics:

- Many aspects of the syntactic structure of a sentence are predicted from lexical properties of the verbs (and other predicates in it).
- Verb meanings provide a key to verb's syntactic behaviour.

(11) Subevent Identification Condition:
Each subevent in an event structure template must be “identified” by an argument and a lexical predicate (e.g., a V(erb), an A(djective) or a P(reposition)) in the syntax. (cf. Rappaport Hovav & Levin 1998: 112)

- (12) a. sing [x **sing'** y] [Activity]
b. run [x **run'**] [Activity]
c. dead [x **dead'**] [State]
d. die [BECOME [x **dead'**]] [Achievement]
e. kill [[x **ACT**] CAUSE [BECOME [y **dead'**]]]
[Accomplishment]
- (cf. van Valin & LaPolla 1997)

(13) Activity

a. [x ACT <MANNER: SWEEP> y]

b. Terry swept [the floor].

- Sweep of activity sense has an event structure template consisting of a single event.
- Both participants (x, y) are associated with the same subevent.
- Only one (i.e. x) of the two (x, y) needs to be expressed and the other (y) is a semantically invoked argument, rather than a structural participant, therefore, not necessarily expressed.

(14) *Sweep*

a. Terry *swept*.

b. get things from the cleaning cupboard and stuff. ... I've seen, I've seen her *sweeping*. She swept earlier on today! She *sweeps everywhere* continually, she always sleeping, *sweeping* isn't she? I know er she sweeps in the hearth at lunchtime [COLT:b142103.cor].

c. ... but they had to you know use paper and kindle and we *swept with brooms* and my life has never been easier she said [BNC:KBF 2197]

d. Do you *sweep the floor* before you walk on it so you don't tread on any ants [ICE-GB:S1A-032 #79:1:D]

(15) Accomplishment (externally caused change of state)

a. [[x ACT <MANNER: *BREAK*>] CAUSE [BECOME [y <*BROKEN*>]]]

b. Chris broke *(the vase).

- The causing subevent → the result subevent [change of state]
- Each subevent is identified by a predicate (ACT<MANNER:*BREAK*>, BECOME [<*BROKEN*>]) and associated with argument NPs (i.e. **x**, **y**).
- Omitting object would leave a subevent without an associated NP, leading to ungrammaticality: *Chris broke. ((11) & (16)).

(16) Argument Realisation Condition:

- There must be an argument XP in the syntax for each structural participant in the event structure.
- Each argument XP in the syntax must be associated with an identified subevent in the event structure.

(Rappaport Hovav & Levin 1998: 113)

3. The Problem

(17) Tigers only *kill* at night.

(18) Scarface *killed* again.

(19) He'll *lie, steal, murder*--anything to further his ambitions. – Kilby

(20) An old broom can *sweep cleaner*.

(21) Dave *cut and chopped* until there was enough to fill a medium sauce pan with meat and a spicy barbecue sauce.

4. The Data

- (22) Some people *build* while others *destroy*.
- (23)
- a. The chef-in-training *chopped* and *diced* all afternoon.
 - b. He *cut* and *chopped* and she felt herself detached from the rotten wood. [BNC]
 - c. Tigers only *kill* at night.
 - d. The police believe the man may *kill* again. [LDOCE4]
 - e. Jailed murderer *killed* again on a day's parole.- *Daily Telegraph* (19/7/2000)
 - f. Paroled murderer Jack Abbott, once the toast of New York's literary set, *killed* again. Last month, he hanged himself. Clive Davis explores the perils of radical chic. A literary celebrity died in America this month, yet his passing aroused little co... - *The Times* (1/3/2002)
 - g. Just a tiny drop of this poison is enough to *kill*. [CDAE]
 - h. Cigarettes *kill*. [WordNet]
 - i. Smoking can *kill*. [CALD2]
 - j. Drunken driving *kills*. [WordNet]
 - k. Excessive tiredness while driving can *kill*. [OALD6]
 - l. The Sergeant: We don't *murder*, we *kill*. - *The Big Red One* (1980)
 - m. stiff penalties for motorists who *kill*, *maim*, and *injure*. [COBUILD4]
 - n. It is better to *die oneself* than to *kill*. [COBUILD3]
 - o. The soldiers specialized in going out in small groups, to *kill* with a very high degree of selectivity. [COBUILD4]
 - p. Thou shalt not *kill*. [COBUILD4]
 - q. soldiers are not allowed to shoot to *kill* unless faced with a life-threatening
 - r. amples of money's power to *ruin and destroy* are everywhere, not least in the ... [Bank of English]
 - s. for 30 minutes or so, then *rinse and dry* well on a tea towel. Heat oil in ... [Bank of English]
 - t. There are a couple of old-fashioned home remedies : shake tea leaves and vinegar together in the vase , then *rinse and dry*. [Collins Wordbanks]
- (24) Money markets are the places where people with money *buy* and *sell*.
- (25) We *gave*, they *took* .
- (26) He must *be convinced* if he is to *convince*. - COBUILD EG

5. Alternative Explanations

5.1. Telicity is a relevant factor or not?

- (27) a. The chef-in-training *chopped and diced* *in an hour/for hours.
- b. Tigers only *kill* at night *in a period of their lives/for a period of their lives.
- c. The singer always aimed to *dazzle* in an instant/for hours.
- d. Pat gave and gave, but he just *took and took* *in a year/for years.
- e. These revolutionary new brooms *sweep cleaner* *in a year/for years.
- f. Always *cut in straight lines* *in the first few years/for the first few years you sew.

(28) a. Scarface was *killing* *(someone) when he got shot.

b. As she was *pleasing* *(an audience), she thought about her upcoming audition.

(29) Three days later Vernage *killed again*.
[BNC]

(30) ?? Pam *killed yesterday*.

5.2. Focal or not?

- Focal arguments serve to convey the new information in a clause. More precisely, “the relation between the focus element and the proposition is assumed to be unpredictable and non-recoverable for the addressee at the time of the utterance. The focus relation relates the pragmatically non-recoverable to the recoverable component of a proposition and thereby creates a new state of information in the mind of the addressee”. (Lambrecht 1994: 218)

5.3. Topical or not?

- A sentence topic can be defined as a “matter of [already established] current interest which a statement is about and with respect to which a proposition is to be interpreted as relevant”. (Lambrecht 1994: 119)
- Topical elements can be shown not to allow the type of object omission discussed here (Fillmore 1986):
(31) What happened to *that carrot*?
I *chopped* *(it).
(32) What happened to *that gazelle*?
The tiger *killed* *(it).

● Topical elements: definite and syntactically active/visible

(33) The chef-in-training chopped and diced all day. *They were put into a large salad.

(34) Tigers only kill at night. *They are easily caught at that time.

(35) a. This leads people to the following conclusion.

b. This leads to the following conclusion.

c. This leads people_i [CP [IP PRO_i [VP t_i to conclude what follows]]].

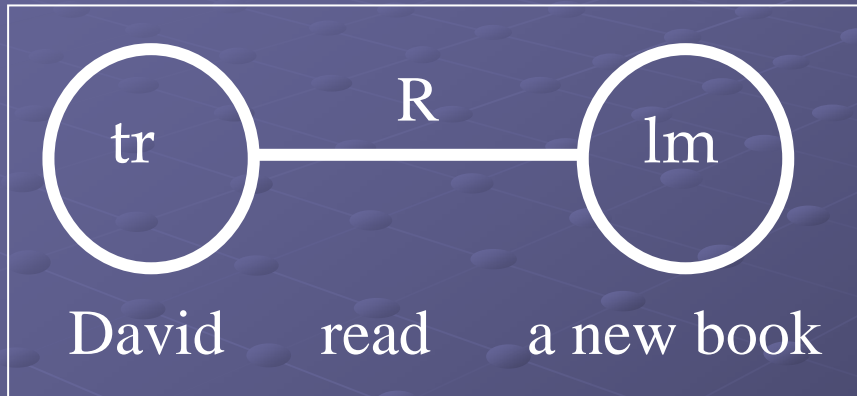
d. * This leads [ϕ _i] [CP [IP PRO_i [VP t_i to conclude what follows]]].

6. A Cognitive Grammar Analysis

- (36) a. David read a new book.
b. David is reading.
c. The best way to learn is to read.

(37)

a.

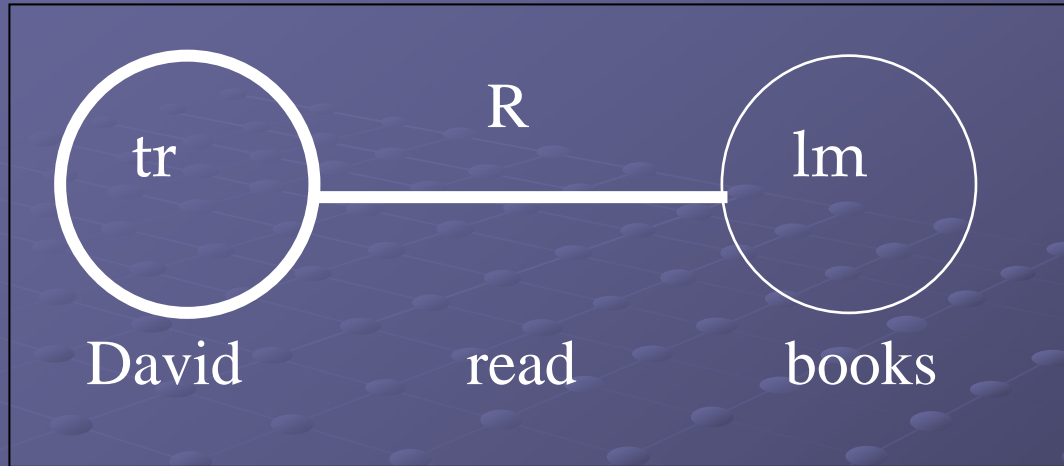


Trajector [tr]: The figure within a relational profile.

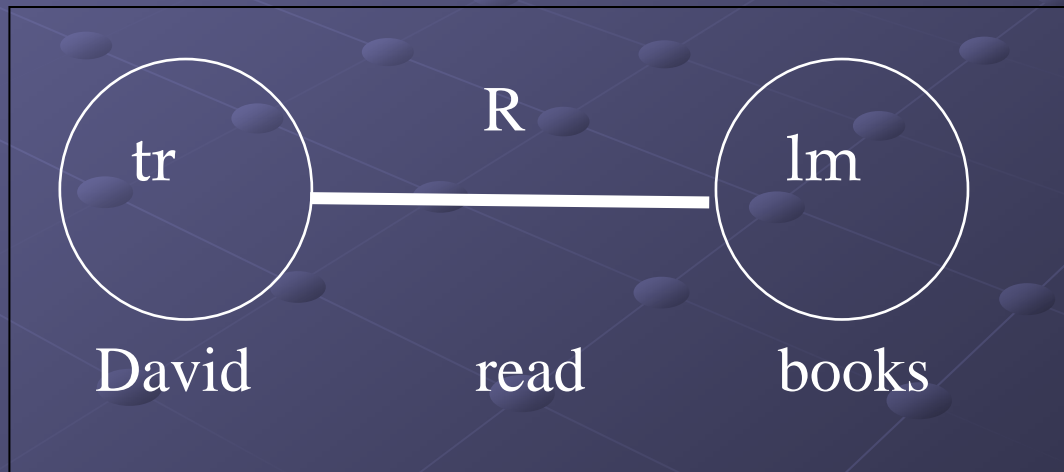
Landmark [lm]: A salient substructure other than the trajector of a relational predication or the profile of a nominal predication.

Relation [R]: A diadic relation represented by the verb

(b)



(c)

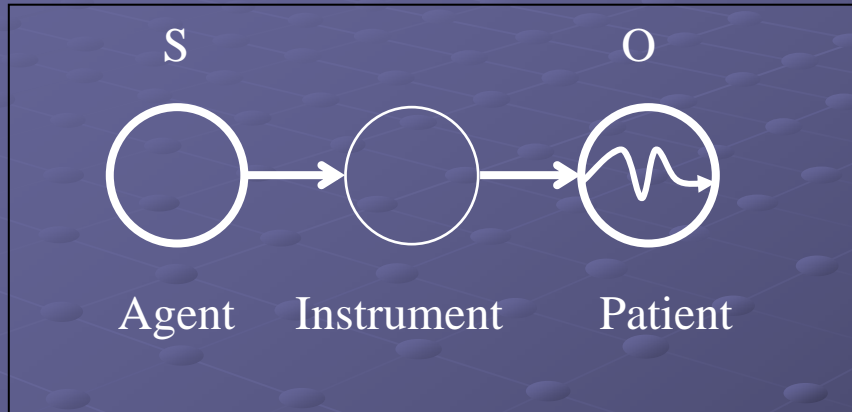


(38)

- Profile on a base
- The base of a predication is its domain (or each domain in a complex matrix)
- Its profile is a substructure elevated to a special level of prominence within the base, namely that substructure which the expression “designates”.
- An expression’s semantic value **does not reside in either the base or the profile individually, but rather in the relationship between the two.**

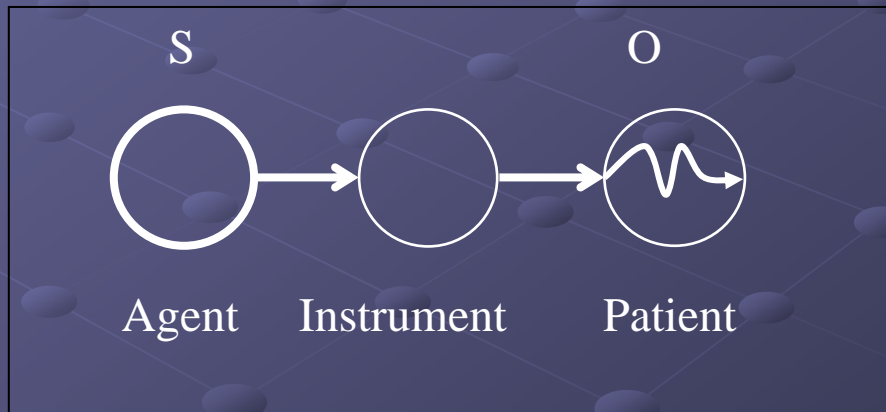
(39)

a.



default

b.



Non-default

(40) A: When do these animals *hunt*?

B: Beavers *kill* during the day, but tigers only *kill* at night.

(41) a. He was always opposed to the idea of *murder*, but in the middle of battlefield, he had no trouble *killing*.

b. She picked up her carving knife and began to *chop*.

c. Why would they give this creep a light prison term!? He *murdered*!

d. How could Griselda get a lighter prison term than Zard? He *burglarized*, but she *murdered*.

(42) Principle of Omission under Low Discourse Prominence:

Omission of the patient argument may be possible when the patient argument is construed to be de-emphasized/unprofiled in the discourse vis-à-vis the action

(itself via repetition, contrastive focus, etc). (cf. Goldberg 2005)

- covert indefinite objects → generic statements
→ characterising property

(43) He likes to *shock*.

(44) That movie always *shocks*.

(45) He likes to *please*.

(46) I'll aim to *please*.

(47) He never fails to *please*.

(48) ?His behaviour at lunch *pleased*.

(49) Jesus *saves*.

(50) Love *heals*.

(51) That dog *bites*.

(52) “She *stole* but she could not *rob*.” (Beatles song:
She came in through the Bathroom Window)

(53) Principle of Omission (revised):

Omission of the patient argument may be possible when the externally caused two-participant event is construed not to be characterising the whole relation consisting of Agent + Predicate.

Default: the whole relation profiled

Non-default: the relation excluding Patient (i.e. action/property) profiled

- (54) A young woman who I imagined was older than myself got up in a bus to offer me a seat. I *declined*. She *insisted*. I realized she thought I was pregnant and accepted graciously. - M. Spark, *A Far Cry from Kensington*
- (55) Richard had drunk champagne at lunch for the first time in his life-old Amos Kerbes had *insisted* and, with the whole Somerset Club looking on, Richard could hardly have *refused*. - J. Archer, *Kane & Abel*

7. Conclusion

- It is argued that given sufficient attention to lexical semantics and discourse factors in the framework of Cognitive Linguistics, the “exceptions” to object omission with externally caused change of state verbs and in fact their general tendencies themselves follow without additional grammatical stipulation.

8. Residual Problems

- Strength of transitive verbs

- (56) a. The terrorists *killed/murdered/assassinated* three political figures.
- b. The terrorists *killed* again.
- c. ? The terrorists *murdered* again.
- d. * The terrorists *assassinated* again.

(Ritter & Rosen 1996)

● Recipe context

- (57) First warm the pot with hot water. Add one teaspoon of tea for each person and one for the pot. Pour on freshly boiling water, *stir* [ϕ] and *allow* [ϕ] to stand for five minutes. – Ridgways
- (58) Do not *allow* [ϕ i] [PROi to boil]. - WPC
- (59) Roll up each piece into a round and *allow* [ϕ i] [PROi to rest for 10 minutes]. – WPC
- (60) *Catch!* (can be said by the speaker, who threw the hearer a ball)
- (61) *I threw him the ball but he failed to *catch*.

(62) Shall I *dry* (“the dishes”)? (In a context of washing-up) (Resnik 1993)

(63) *The dishes were still wet so I *dried* (“them”).

(64) *Take care: it may bite.*