

Argument Structure – AN5016MA

5-credit seminar
Spring 2017

Course Description

This course is an exploration of various argument structural phenomena and some of the most influential theories of the past decades aiming to account for these phenomena. After a brief introduction to some significant theories of the 1980s and 1990s, we will focus on questions that have received much attention in the literature in more recent years. Through various reading assignments and in-class discussions, students are hoped to improve their critical thinking and data analysis skills.

Throughout the course we will be interested in the grammatical behavior of verbs and we will devote attention to the following questions:

- Which facets of verb meaning are grammatically relevant?
- How shall we represent verb meaning so that we can capture the various argument realization patterns that a given verb is associated with?
- How do verb alternations come about? What do these alternations look like across languages?
- How are languages different when it comes to the lexicalization of events?
- How are lexicalization patterns constrained? What are possible and impossible verb meanings?

The course concludes in a student presentation and a paper demonstrating that students can read and interpret the literature, and they can also build on it when analyzing linguistic data.

Reading assignments

- Beavers, John & Andrew-Koontz Garboden. 2012. Manner and result in the roots of verbal meaning. *Linguistic Inquiry* 43(3), 331-369.
- Folli, Raffaella & Heidi Harley. 2012. The syntax of argument structure: evidence from Italian complex predicates. *Journal of Linguistics* 49(1), 93-125.
- Levin, Beth & Malka Rappaport Hovav. 2005. *Argument Realization*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Rappaport Hovav, Malka & Beth Levin. 2001. An event structure account of English resultatives. *Language* 77, 766-797.
- Rappaport Hovav, Malka & Beth Levin. 2010. Reflections on manner/result complementarity. In E. Doron, M. Rappaport Hovav & I. Sichel (eds.), *Syntax, Lexical Semantics, and Event Structure*, 21-38. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Ramchand, Gillian. 2008. *Verb Meaning and the Lexicon*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Schäfer, Florian & Margot Vivanco. 2016. Anticausatives are weak scalar expressions, not reflexive expressions. *Glossa: a journal of general linguistics*, 1(1), 18.
- Talmy, Leonard. 1985. Lexicalization patterns: semantic structure in lexical forms. In T. Shopen (ed.), *Language Typology and Syntactic Description, vol. 3: Grammatical Categories and the Lexicon*, 57-149. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Vendler, Zeno. 1967. Verbs and times. *Linguistics in Philosophy*, 97-121. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Wechsler, Stephen. 2015. *Word Meaning and Syntax: Approaches to the Interface*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Grading

The final grade will be based on a presentation and a min. 2500-word research paper.

Student presentations

Students will work on a specific problem throughout the semester and present their findings in class. Each presentation will be accompanied by a handout or a PowerPoint/Prezi slideshow. Students must prepare a two-page draft of their presentation and schedule a meeting with the instructor at least a week before the presentation is due for feedback on this draft.

The research paper

This paper is an extended version of the presentation. It presents a specific puzzle by providing background literature on the topic, numerous illustrative examples and, as a minimal requirement, some reflection on ways to solve the puzzle.

The research paper needs to be typewritten (12 pt Times New Roman, double-spaced) and submitted via e-mail on or before June 12, 2017.

For those graduating in Spring 2017, the deadline for this assignment is May 24, 2017.

Some topics for the presentation and research paper

Below are some possible topics and background literature that students can explore in their presentation and research paper. These are by no means obligatory; other topics are also welcome.

- **Transitivity and particle verbs in Hungarian**

É. Kiss, Katalin. 2005. First Steps towards a Theory of the Verbal Particle. In: Christopher Piñón – Péter Siptár (eds.), *Approaches to Hungarian 9*, 57-88. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó.

É. Kiss, Katalin. 2008. The function and the syntax of the verbal particle. In Katalin É. Kiss (ed.), *Event Structure and the Left Periphery*, 17-55. Dordrecht: Springer.

Kiefer, Ferenc. 2006. *Aspektus és akcióminőség különös tekintettel a magyar nyelvre*. [Aspect and aktionsart with special attention to the Hungarian language]. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó.

Kiefer, Ferenc & Ladányi Mária. 2000. Az igekötők [Verbal particles]. In: Ferenc Kiefer (ed.), *Strukturális Magyar Nyelvtan III. Morfológia* [A structural grammar of Hungarian III. Morphology], 453-518. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó.

- **Argument structure properties of resultatives in English and/or Hungarian (or any other language that has resultatives)**

Komlósy, András. 1992. Régensek és vonzatok. [Heads and Complements]. In: Ferenc Kiefer (ed.), *Strukturális Magyar Nyelvtan. Mondattan*. [A structural grammar of Hungarian. Syntax], Vol. 1, 299-529. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó.

Komlósy, András. 1994. Complements and Adjuncts. In: Ferenc Kiefer & Katalin É. Kiss (eds.), *Syntax and Semantics. The Syntactic Structure of Hungarian*, 91-178. San Diego: Academic Press.

Ramchand, Gillian. 2008. *Verb Meaning and the Lexicon*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Rappaport Hovav, Malka & Beth Levin. 2001. An event structure account of English resultatives. *Language* 77, 766-797.

Wechsler, Stephen. 2005. Resultatives under the 'Event-argument Homomorphism'. In: Nomi Erteschik-Shir & Tova Rapoport (eds.), *The Syntax of Aspect*, 255-273. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- **The causative alternation: morphological properties and derivational characteristics**

Beavers, John & Andrew Koontz-Garboden. 2013a. In defense of the reflexivization analysis of anticausativization. *Lingua* 131, 199-216.

Beavers, John & Andrew Koontz-Garboden. 2013b. Complications in diagnosing lexical meaning: a rejoinder to Horvath and Siloni (2013). *Lingua* 134, 210-218.

Chierchia, Gennaro. 1989/2004. A semantics for unaccusatives and its syntactic consequences. In: Alexiadou A., Anagnostopoulou, E. & Everaert M. (eds.), *The Unaccusativity Puzzle*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 22-59.

Horvath, Júlia & Tal Siloni. 2011. Anticausatives: against reflexivization. *Lingua* 121, 2176-2186.

Horvath, Júlia & Tal Siloni. 2013. Anticausatives have no Cause(r): A rejoinder to Beavers and Koontz-Garboden. *Lingua* 131, 217-230.

Lundquist, Björn, Corley, Martin, Tungseth, Mai, Sorace, Antonella & Gillian Ramchand. 2016. Anticausatives are semantically reflexive in Norwegian, but not in English. *Glossa: a journal of general linguistics*, 1(1), 47.

Rákosi, György. 2012: In defence of the non-causative analysis of anticausatives. In: Everaert, M., Marelj, M. & Siloni, T. (eds.), *The Theta System: Argument Structure at the Interface*, 177-199. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Schäfer, Florian. 2009. The causative alternation. *Language and Linguistics Compass* 3 (2): 641-681.

Schäfer, Florian & Margot Vivanco. 2016. Anticausatives are weak scalar expressions, not reflexive expressions. *Glossa: a journal of general linguistics*, 1(1), 18.

- **Hungarian verbs in Talmy's (1985) typology: aspectual and argument structural consequences**

Talmy, Leonard. 1985. Lexicalization patterns: semantic structure in lexical forms. In T. Shopen (ed.), *Language Typology and Syntactic Description, vol. 3: Grammatical Categories and the Lexicon*, 57-149. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- **The encoding of manner and result states in English and/or Hungarian (or any other language)**

Beavers, John & Andrew-Koontz Garboden. 2012. Manner and result in the roots of verbal meaning. *Linguistic Inquiry* 43(3), 331-369.

Rappaport Hovav, Malka & Beth Levin. 2010. Reflections on manner/result complementarity. In Edith Doron, Malka Rappaport Hovav & Ivy Sichel (eds.), *Syntax, Lexical Semantics, and Event Structure*, 21-38. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Weekly Syllabus

Week #	Topics to be discussed in class	Reading assignments
Week 1	Challenges for theories of argument realization	Levin & Rappaport Hovav (2005): Chapter 1
Week 2	Semantic role lists and generalized semantic roles	Levin & Rappaport Hovav (2005): Chapter 2 and Section 3.1
Week 3	Decomposition approaches	Wechsler (2015): Section 4.4
Week 4	Aspectual theories of argument realization	Levin and Rappaport Hovav (2005): Section 4.2
Week 5	An event-structure account of English resultatives	Rappaport Hovav & Levin (2001)
Week 6	Verbs in resultative constructions <i>This class will be taught by our Erasmus-guest lecturer, Imola Farkas (Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj).</i>	Ramchand (2008): pp. 38-45, 63-91, 100-109, 110-138 Vendler (1967)
Week 7	A syntactic approach to argument structure	Folli & Harley (2012)
Week 8	<i>Consultation week – No class</i>	

Week 9	Argument alternations: Causative, inchoative, and result state alternations Student presentations #1	Wechsler (2015): Section 3.4
Week 10	Anticausatives are weak scalar expressions, not reflexive expressions Student presentations #2	Schäfer & Vivanco (2016)
Week 11	Lexicalization of events 1: Typology of motion and manner lexicalization	Wechsler (2015): Section 3.7.1 Talmy (1985)
Week 12	Lexicalization of events 2: Manner-result complementarity 1	Wechsler (2015): Section 3.7.2 Rappaport Hovav & Levin (2010)
Week 13	Lexicalization of events 2: Manner-result complementarity 2	Beavers & Koontz-Garboden (2012)
Week 14	Review	

Place and Time

Room 111

4:00-5:40 p.m. on Thursdays

Contact

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Friday 10:00-11:00 a.m.