

English benefactive NPs

Ida Toivonen, Carleton University

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Benefactives in English

- 1 Johnny baked cookies for Jessica.
 - 2 Johnny baked Jessica cookies.
- Is *Jessica* in (2) an argument or an adjunct?
 - How do we treat English benefactive NPs in LFG?

Argumenthood

- “Adjuncts are always optional, whereas complements are frequently obligatory. The difference between them is that a complement is a phrase which is *selected* by the head, and therefore has an especially close relationship with the head; adjuncts, on the other hand, are more like ‘bolt-on’ extra pieces of information and don’t have a particularly close relationship with the head.” (Tallerman 2005,98)
- “From a semantic perspective, subjects and complements share in common the fact that they generally represent entities directly involved in the particular action or event described by the predicate: to use the relevant semantic terminology, we can say that subjects and complements are **arguments** of the predicate with which they are associated. [...] An expression which serves to provide (optional) additional information about the time or place (or manner, or purpose etc.) of an activity or event is said to serve as an **adjunct**. (Radford 2004,3–4)

Are benefactive NPs arguments or adjuncts?

- Not a core participant: *adjunct*
- Optional: *adjunct*
- NP complement of the verb at c-structure: *argument*
- F-structure object: *argument*
 - ▶ However, see Kibort (2007), Hudson (1992) for the objecthood-status of "indirect objects"

Argumenthood tests

- Other than the core participant test and the optionality test, the argumenthood tests are hard to apply.

The alternation test

- 1 John baked cookies for Mary.
 - 2 John baked Mary cookies.
- Lewis (2004), Van Valin and LaPolla (1997,162)
 - Phrases that alternate with core GFs are arguments.
 - *argument*
 - The PP is an argument?
 - True alternation?

The relative ordering test

- ① He gave the man the cookie.
 - ② *He gave the cookie the man.
- Arguments have a more fixed position in the sentence than adjuncts.
 - In English, arguments tend to be positioned closer to the verb than adjuncts.
 - *argument*
 - *John gambled away his money.*
 - (2) also involves reordering *cookie*.

Adjunct islands

- ① I cooked the parents of the bride an amazing meal.
 - ② *Who did you cook the parents of an amazing meal?
- You can extract out of arguments but not out of adjuncts.
 - *adjunct*
 - However, extraction out of NPs is constrained (Ross's NP-Island Constraint).

Wh-word conjunction

- 1 I baked John some cookies.
 - 2 *Who and what did you bake?
- You cannot conjoin two argument *wh*-words.
 - *argument*
 - However, **Who did you bake cookies?*

VP anaphora

- ① Mary baked Susie a cake and Bill baked Tommy some cookies.
 - ② *Mary baked Susie a cake and Bill did so Tommy some cookies.
- Adjuncts may be added to 'do so' clauses but arguments may not:
argument
 - However, maybe (2) is bad because of the second object?

Pseudo-cleft

- ① Mandy wrote Lisa poem.
 - ② *What Mandy did Lisa was write a poem.
- Adjuncts, not arguments, can occur after *do* in a VP-focussed pseudo-cleft: *argument*

Mixed behaviour

- Intuitively, benefactive NPs display mixed behavior: argumentlike and adjunctlike
 - The “argumenthood tests” don’t work very well.
 - Nevertheless: benefactive NPs pattern with arguments for a lot of the tests, and they seem to be the OBJs
 - On the other hand: optional and not a core participant (1–2): *adjunct*
- ① Mary carved John a statue.
 - ② Sally cut her sister some chicken.

Does it matter?

- It matters for the lexical representation and it matters at a-structure, f-structure and c-structure.

Proposal: Derived arguments

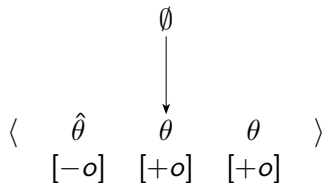
- Benefactive NPs are not typically part of the original argument list of verbs
- They are added at argument structure by an a-structure rule.
- They are *derived arguments* (Needham and Toivonen 2011)

Bresnan (2001)

Bresnan (2001,315): “The ditransitive of *cook* has an added beneficiary role, which is a patientlike ‘internal argument’.”

- Both parents cooked the children supper.

Benefactive NP rule



- cf. Bresnan and Moshi's applicative rule

- Not all benefactive *for*-PPs can alternate with benefactive NPs

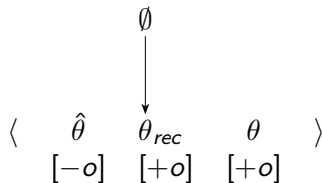
- ① (a) She opened the door for him.
(b) *She opened him the door.
- ② (a) I changed my hairstyle for Leah.
(b) *I changed Leah my hairstyle.

Different roles of the *for*-PP

- ① I cooked the happy couple some food for my mother.
- See, e.g., Wechsler (1995), Johnston (1999)
- The benefactive NP must be interpreted as the *recipient* of the object.
- Different markings in some languages?

Sw: Jag bakade en kaka till/åt/för henne.
I baked a cake to/to/for her

Benefactive-recipients



Problems?

- ① (a) I threw a party for her.
(b) I threw her a party
- ② (a) I wrote a book for her.
(b) I wrote her a book.

When does the rule apply?

- The rule may apply any time a participant is a beneficiary and a recipient of the (original) object.
- WWW examples (found with google):
 - 1 I'll butter you some bread.
 - 2 Three weeks before, when Boston was in Raleigh, Carolina stole them a point by getting a tie
 - 3 I was actually meaning to draw his parents a picture of him
 - 4 We serve breakfast all day, so no matter what time you get here we'll scramble you some eggs, fry some bacon, or...

Passivization

- ① (a) The carpenter sanded him a board.
(b) *He was sanded a board by the carpenter. (Wechsler 1995)
- ② *My sister was carved a soap statue of Bugs Bunny (by a famous sculptor). (Kay 2005)
 - Benefactive NPs cannot passivize.
 - Specified [+o]

Bresnan (2001)

Bresnan (2001,315): “The ditransitive of *cook* has an added beneficiary role, which is a patientlike ‘internal argument’. It is thus assigned the $[-r]$ feature”.

- *Both parents cooked the children supper.*
- *cook-for* $\langle \begin{array}{ccc} x & y & z \\ [-o] & [-r] & [+o] \end{array} \rangle$
- Predicts that the benefactive NP *can* passivize.
- *The children were cooked supper.*

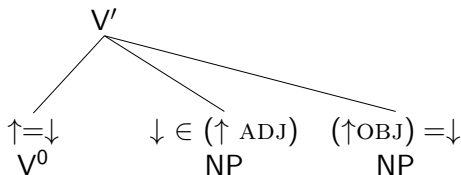
Passivization

- Wechsler (1995): some verbs (*cook*, *bake*) are lexicalized as three-place predicates
- see also Kibort (2007)
- I assume that a few verbs have two lexical entries with different argument structures: one two-place predicate and one three-place predicate.
- The three-place predicates have their second argument stored as $[-r]$
- The productive rule: benefactive NP is $[+o]$
- Note: Schnoebelen shows that the data are not so clear.

Conclusions

- Benefactive NPs display characteristics of arguments.
- However, they are optional and they are not core participants of the verb.
- *Derived arguments*: not part of the original lexical entry for the verb, optionally added.
- Several of the examples that Needham and Toivonen (2011) argue are derived arguments (e.g., instrumentals, experiencer PPs) are perhaps better analyzed as *thematic adjuncts*, as suggested by Rákosi (2006a,b, 2012).
- Benefactive NPs do not make good adjuncts, at least not at c-structure.

Benefactive NPs as thematic adjuncts?



- Also, if the argumenthood tests are meaningful for benefactive NPs, they rule in favour of an argument analysis, not an adjunct analysis.

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