Simple Verb Clauses

Basic word order: S-V-O
Clauses encodes proposition.

- Clause types:
  The structure of a clause may be:
  Simple
  Complex
• Proposition Types:

A proposition may stand for:

❖ **STATE**: an existing condition without change

Temporary: He was angry.
Permanent: He is Chinese.

❖ **EVENT**: involves change of state over time

Unintended event: The ball rolled off the field.
Intended event:

Bounded: He ran to the market.
Unbounded: He ran fast.
Distinction in Eventuality

• **Stative vs. eventive** predicate
  – I like/envy him (very much).
  – I kicked/bothered him. (*very much)
  – 我很羨慕他/**我很打他

• **Volitional vs. non-volitional** events (agent control?)
  – Don’t move/cry/hit her
  – Don’t *be dead/*die/*arise  (Don’t rise!)
  – 別高興/??別快樂

• **Telic vs. atelic** events (endpoint?)
  – He walked up the hill **in three hours (??for three hours).**
  – He walked **for three hours (*in three hours).**
  – 他走了三個小時 /??他走上山三個小時
Lexical Aspects

• **State: ------**
  – individual-level: I’m Chinese.
  – Stage-level: I’m angry.

• **Activity: //////////////**
  – I ran (for three hours) -durative

• **Achievement: /* -punctual**
  – It broke. He died.

• **Accomplishment: //////////* -telic**
  – I built a house (in an hour).
Verbs Types

- Verb
  - the core of a clause
  - determines the propositional frame of the clause:

1) Number and types of grammatical roles
2) Semantic roles of the arguments
• Cry [Subj V]
  (Experiencer)  He cried.

• Jump [Subj V]
  (Agent/actor)  He jumped.

• Beat [Subj V Obj]
  (Agent Patient)  She beat him.

• Give [Subj V Obj1 Obj2]
  (Agent Recipient Theme)
  She gave him a hug.
Grammatical Roles of Verb Argument
(Subj, Direct Obj, Indirect Obj, Nominal Pred)

- Defined by:
  1) Word order  
  2) Morphology  
  3) Grammatical constraint (e.g., agreement)  
  4) Topicality in discourse

- Subject:
  Preceding the V  
  Morphologically unmarked  
  Requires agreement with the V  
  Most important participant at the point of discourse
• **(Direct) Object:**
  Following the verb
  Morphologically unmarked
  Does not require agreement
  Secondary topic of the clause

• **Indirect Object:**
  Following the V and Obj.
  Morphologically Marked by a preposition with semantic role
  Non-topical

• **Nominal Predicate:**
  following copular V
  Unmarked
  Non-topical
Semantic Roles

The kind of involvement of the participants in the state/event.

Mary kicked John with her boots, for her sister, at the playground.

Mary heard John crying.

Mary went to John with her father.
Major Semantic roles

- **Agent**: typically human, acting deliberately to initiate the event.
- **Patient**: be in a state (Theme) or affected by the event.
- **Dative (Experiencer or recipient)**: a conscious participant, but not the deliberate initiator.
- **Instrument**: typically inanimate, used by the agent to perform the action.
- **Benefactive**: typically human, for whose benefit the action is performed.
- **Locative**: the place, where the state/event takes place or toward which or away from which some participant is moving.
- **Associative**: accompanying the agent, patient or dative, but is not as central/important.
To vs. For

- I mailed a book **to** her.
  
  I mailed a book **for** her.

- I bought a book **to** her **for** my brother.
‘Dative’ may be:

- **Experiencer:**
  - I like/miss her.
  - I saw the President.
  - It pleases to me.

- **Recipient**
  She gave a book to me.
Note

1. Can be further divided (Location, Goal, Source)
2. Defined with prototypes
3. Major in the sense that it has more grammatical consequences.
Interaction with Grammatical Roles

1. Distribution of Semantic roles in grammatical roles:

- **Agent:** can only be Subj.
  
  - He jumped to the car
  - He threw the ball.

- **Patient:** Subj; Obj; or In Obj.
  
  - The ice melt.
  - I melt the ice.
  - I hit him.

- **Dative:** Subj, Obj, In Obj.
  
  - Joe saw some smoke.
  - I promised him.
  - I gave some money to Joe.
Interaction with Grammatical Roles

- **Others** (benefactive, instrument, associative, locative): Indirect Object

  I bought this **for you**.
  I cut the cake **with a knife**.
  I went with her.
  I went **to the store**
Access to Subjecthood

- Access to subjecthood in simple clause:
  Agent > dative > patient > others

- The dog chased the cat.
  (agent) (patient)

- The dog heard the cat.
  (dative) (patient)

- The bread was in the oven.
  (Patient) (locative)
Classification of Verbs

Transitivity

• Syntactic Definition:
  - verbs with a direct Obj → transitive
  - verbs without a direct Obj → intransitive

  *He broke the cup.*
  *The cup broke.*
Semantic Definition – Prototype

Three semantic properties:

- **Agentivity**: The Subj is a deliberating acting agent.

- **Affectiveness**: The Obj is a concrete, visibly and physically affected patient.

  *Henry kicked Sally.*
  *Henry hugged Sally.*
  *Henry loved Sally.*
  *Henry saw Sally.*
Semantic Definition

- **Perfectivity**: The event is bounded, terminated, fast-changing and took place in real time.

  I ate it up.  I pushed it open.
  I am eating it.  I carried it.
  I will eat it.  I walked him to school.
Prototypical Transitive Verbs

Creation  built a house/wrote a book.
Destruction smashed the glass.
Change of physical state  
  enlarge the room
  chopped wood.
Change of location  They moved the desk.
Change of surface condition  washed/painted the car
Change of internal property  I heated/chilled the pot.

Manner and Instrument incorporated:  
  murder/smash/shred/knife
Less-Prototypical Transitive Verbs

1. Dative-Subj  (Conscious, but non-active)
   See/Feel/Hear/Understand
   • Can be used in Imperative: Feel the motion
   • See for yourself
   • Taken as having some degree of agent-control

2. Dative-Obj  (internal, mental effect)
   They insult her.
   She spoiled the child.
   He amused them.
3. Patient-Subj Cause (as human-causer)
   Dative-Obj
   
   *The idea amused him.*

   *The news surprised him.*

   cf. *Curiosity killed him.*

4. Instrument-Subj (responsible for the event)
   
   *The hammer smashed the window.*

   *The bomb killed him.*

5. Locative-Obj (as if affected)
   
   *She approached him.*

   *They entered the house.*
6. Cognate Patient-Obj
(as created product of the event)
sang a song/dance the rumba
gave a speech

cf. made a left turn made an error
took a leap had an idea
made a circle took a risk

7. Incorporated Patient
(overt patient is locative or dative)

*He fed the cow.* (gave food to the cow)
*He stoked the furnace.* (put wood into it)
8. Associative-Obj
(co-agent as affected patient)

*Henry met Sally.*

*I joined them for lunch.*

9. Verbs of possession
(patient-or Experincr-Subj)

*She has a big house.*

*The house got a nice master.*

*I got an idea.*

10. Unspecified Obj
(stereotypical, habitual, predictable, and non-referring)

*I ate/drank/drove/taught.*
Discussion Question

• Chinese has a special construction called the BA-construction:

  • 我把他當了。
  • 我把他賣了。
  • 我把書丟掉。

• Define the syntactic pattern. What are the grammatical elements occurring in the sentence?

• Define its semantic characteristics. What is the construction used for? What are the semantic requirements of the construction?
Simple Intransitive Verbs

- **Subj-Agent**: He worked/danced/sang.
- **Subj-Exp.**: He meditated/dreamed.
- **Subj-Patient**
  - Patient of state (=theme):
    He slept/sat there.
  - Patient of change:
    He fell/slipped.
Intransitive verbs with an indirect object (IO)

1. **IO-locative**
   
   *walked to school*
   
   *came from home*

2. **IO-dative or patient**

   *I talked to John.*
   
   *I got angry at John.*

3. **IO-associative**

   *She fought with her mother.*

   cf.  *She fought her mother.*
   
   *She and her mother fought.*
Bi-transitive verbs (di-transitive)

- Agent-Subj V Patient-DO ?:IO

1. Dative-IO

   I gave a book/my love to him.
   I showed a house to him.

2. Benefactive-IO

   I bought a book for him.

3. Locative-IO vs. Instrumental-IO (Reverse relation):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Put X into Y</th>
<th>Fill Y with X</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Take X out of Y</td>
<td>Empty Y of X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spread X on Y</td>
<td>Cover Y with X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrap X around Y</td>
<td>Wrap Y with X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What is the difference?

*I sprayed the paint on the wall.*
*I sprayed the wall with paint.*

- **Semantic effect**
  
  Which is more affected? entire wall?

  *I sprayed the paint on the wall.*
  *I sprayed the wall with paint.* - **entire wall is affected**

  => DO: Semantically and pragmatically more affected

- **Pragmatic effect**

  Which is more topical and given?

  Q: What did you do with the paint?

  a) I sprayed it on the wall.
  b) ?? I sprayed the wall with it.

  Q: What did you do to the wall?

  a) I sprayed it with the paint.
  b) ?? I sprayed the paint on it.
• Three-Object Verbs?

\[ I \text{ sold the house to Jane for cash.} \]

• Verbs with two Direct Objects

\[ We \text{ elected him president.} \]

(Agent-Unaffected Patient – Nominal predicate)

cf. \[ We \text{ elected him to be the president.} \] (tree?)
Verbs with verbal complement

1. Clausal Subject

*That she knew it surprised him.*
*It surprised him that she knew it.*

*Her leaving so suddenly shocked him.*
*It shocked him that she left so suddenly.*

*To do this is difficult.*
*It’s difficult to do this.*
2. Modality Verbs (eg. *I plan to leave.*)

- Semantic definition:
  a) Complement is a proposition.
  b) Subject shared by both clauses.
  c) The main verb codes inception, termination, persistence, success, failure, attempt, intent, obligation or ability.

- Syntactic definition:
  a) Complement clause subject is left unexpressed.
  b) Complement is non-finite (no tense/aspect).
  c) Complement is post-verbal

Examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intentional</th>
<th>Want, try, plan vs. refuse, decline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accomplishment</td>
<td>Manage, remember</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aspectual</td>
<td>Start, begin, stop, continue</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Manipulative Verbs (*I want him to leave*)

- **Semantically**
  a) An agent manipulate/influence the behavior of another person.
  b) The complement clause codes the target event to be performed by the manipulee.

- **Syntactically**
  a) The manipulating agent is the Subject.
  b) The manipulee is the subject of the complement.
  c) Complement clause is non-finite.
### Example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influence</th>
<th>order, permit, ask</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prevention</td>
<td>prevent, stop, dissuade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Successful Manipulation</td>
<td>Force, make, let, persuade</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Q**: What about ‘want’ or ‘promise’ (control verbs)?

4. Perception-cognition-utterance (PCU) verbs

\( I \text{ said/think/see that he is a nice guy.} \)

- **Semantically:**
  a) Coding a cognitive, perceptive, or verbal event by the Dative or Agent Subject.
  b) No co-reference restrictions.
- **Syntactically:**
  a) The complement is the object of the main verb.
  b) The complement is finite.
  c) The complement/subordinate clause may be preceded by subordinator that or if.
- **Examples:**
  Perception: see, hear, feel
  Cognition: know, wish, forget, understand
  Utterance: say, claim, propose
5. Informative Verbs

- Agent-Speaker V Someone-NP Something-CL

I told him (that) it’s going to rain tomorrow.
I asked him if he knew Mary.
I said to him that I will leave.
Multiple Membership in Verb Classes

*She told a story.* (Transitive)
*She told him to get out.* (Manipulative)
*She told him that he is a nice guy.* (Informative)

Q: What about ‘forget’?
Verbs That Incorporate Prep

The meeting broke up.
They worked out in the gym.

I broke it down.
I shut him up.
He used up all his credits.

I looked over the entire list.
I looked it over.
Copular Verbs

• The copular-BE
  – Followed by a **predicate** (adjectival or nominal)
  – Semantically impoverished
  – SUB is either patient or dative, never an agent

• Adjectival Predicate
  – **Inherent quality** (individual-level predicate):
    He is tall/ dark-skinned/Chinese. (SUB = PAT)
  – **Temporary states** (stage-level predicate):
    He is sad/busy/angry. (SUB = DAT)
• Nominal Predicate
  – Non-Referring (inherent quality-type):
    *He is a linguist.*
    *She is an American.*
  – Referring (identifying a unique entity-token):
    *He is the only linguist I can talk with.*
    *She is my daughter’s favorite American teacher.*

• Tree diagram:
  She is knowledgeable.
  She is a linguist.
The Process Copula

‘GET’
‘BECOME’
‘TRUN (into)’
Copula GET

- Consider the following pairs of clauses:

  I was angry.    I got angry.
  I am a linguist. *I got a linguist.
  She is skinny.  She got skinny.

**Differences from BE**

1. Typically coding a process (a change of state)
2. Can only code temporary states, not inherent property.
3. Can only take adjectival predicate
The copula ‘BECOME’

*I get excited.*
*I become excited.*

*She was a writer.*  
*She became a writer.* (non-referring)  
*She became our favorite writer.* (referring)

BECOME: Like GET, codes a process.  
Like BE, takes ADJ or NOM predicate.
TURN (INTO)

She turned livid with anger.
The leaves turned yellowish red in the fall.
All of a sudden, the class turned silent.
The sky turned cloudy.

*She turned excited/sad/disappointed. (mental)
*She turned tall/smart/dark-skinned. (inherent)
*She turned a linguist/an American citizen.
He turned into a frog.
The grog turned into a prince.
?He turned into the frog.

TURN:
1. Codes **Perceptually accessible external physical** condition,
2. Cannot take mental or inherent state.
Dummy- Subject Verbs

- Requires ‘it’ as the subject.
- Coding states or events involving natural conditions or weather phenomena.

What does the ‘it’ do in the sentence?
Filling a syntactic slot but having little or no semantic consequences.
Adjectival:

It’s not hot here.
It’s cold today.
It’s so nice here.
It was dark there.

Verbal:

It rained yesterday.
Its’ snowing.
It’s freezing here.

Tree diagram:

It’s snowing.
Stative Copula

SEEM and APPEAR

She seems smart.
He seems handsome.
He appeared stressed.
He appeared mal-nutritioned.

*He seems a linguist.
He seems to be a linguist.
SEEM and APPEAR

1. Syntactically, behave like BE.
   (except for taking nominal Pred.)

2. Semantically, marking truth value, or the speaker’s knowledge/certainty of the state
   (epistemic marking)
Raising

• It seems that [he is sick].

Epistemic uncertainty

• Raising verbs:
  It seems that [he is sick].

  He seems to be sick.
Homework 6

- What are the syntactic and semantic differences between 勸（quan4）and 說服（shuifu2）?
- Which one is the most appropriate translation for ‘persuade’?
Result vs. Non-result

• I opened the door.
  我開門, 但是沒開開。

• He killed the chicken.
  他殺了半天，但是沒殺死。

• I was looking for the key and I found it.
  我找了半天, 終於找到了。

• I was persuading him not to smoke. (Chinese ?)
  I persuaded him not to smoke.