

Syntax Seminar (BBN-ANG-252): Key to H03

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1 In-class exercises

- Provide the theta-grids:
 - (1) a. hit θ -grid: <Agent, Patient>
b. see θ -grid: <Experiencer, Theme>
 - (2) a. tall θ -grid: <Theme>
b. fond θ -grid: <Experiencer, Theme>

2 Homework

- Determine the theta-roles in (3).
 - (3) a. Peter loves Mary.
Peter: Experiencer; Mary: Theme
 - b. The door opened.
door: Theme/Patient
 - c. The purse was stolen.
purse: Theme/Patient
 - d. Mary wrote a letter to John the following day.
Mary: Agent; letter: Theme; John: Goal
NB: *the following day* is an adjunct, so it is not assigned a theta role.
 - e. John received a letter from Mary.
John: Beneficiary; letter: Theme; Mary: Source
 - f. They wondered what to do.
they: Experiencer; what to do: proposition
 - g. Mary is beautiful.
Mary: Theme
 - h. John is in Paris.
John: theme; in Paris: locational

- Provide the lexical entries for the following verbs:

- (4) a. Peter **danced** yesterday.
 category: [-F, -N, +V]
 θ -grid: <agent>
 subcat: [\emptyset]
- b. Peter **injured** his knee in the gym.
 category: [-F, -N, +V]
 θ -grid: <agent, patient>
 subcat: [nominal]
- c. Peter **believes** in the future.
 category: [-F, -N, +V]
 θ -grid: <agent, location>
 subcat: [prepositional]
- d. Peter **passed** John the book that I recommended to them.
 category: [-F, -N, +V]
 θ -grid: <agent, goal, theme>
 subcat: [nominal, nominal]
- e. Peter **said** John left in the morning.
 category: [-F, -N, +V]
 θ -grid: <agent, proposition>
 subcat: [sentence]
- f. Peter **put** the letter on the table.
 category: [-F, -N, +V]
 θ -grid: <agent, theme, location>
 subcat: [nominal, prepositional]

NB: *yesterday* in (4a), *in the gym* in (4b) and *in the morning* in (4e) are adjuncts, so no theta role is assigned to them.

- Explain why the following sentences are ungrammatical (you may as well provide the grammatical variant of each sentence). Hint: constituency tests.

- (5) a. *That novel, she read by Hemmingway.
 We're trying to topicalize (topic-front) a part of a DP, but we can only topicalize the whole DP, i.e., *that novel by Hemmingway*.
- b. *It is John the book that Peter gave.
 We're trying to make an *it*-cleft, but the focus part (i.e., what follows *it is*) must be a constituent.
- c. *She believes in the future and in the morning.
 We're trying to coordinate two PPs, but importantly these two PPs have different functions.
- d. *Peter danced on Monday, and John danced it, too.
 We're trying to substitute the PP with *it*, but this pronoun is used to replace noun phrases. Temporal PPs are substituted with *then*. Alternatively, the sentence can be corrected by replacing the VP with *did so*.

- Explain why these sentences are ungrammatical. Hint: thematic roles and the Theta criterion.

(6) a. *Peter Mary saw John.

The verb *see* requires an Experiencer and a Theme. Either the Experiencer role is assigned to more than one argument (*Peter, Mary*) or there is an argument without a role.

b. *Peter met.

The verb *meet* requires an Agent and a Patient. Either one argument (*Peter*) is assigned two roles or the Patient role is not assigned to an argument.

c. *Peter introduced to his family.

The verb *introduce* requires an Agent, a Theme, and a Goal. The Theme is missing.

d. *Peter placed a book.

The verb *place* requires an Agent, a Theme, and a Goal. The Goal is missing.

e. *Danced on Monday.

The verb *dance* requires an Agent. The Agent is missing.