

Homework 4: proto-roles

Semantics I, Fall 2009, JHU
Assigned: 10/12, Due: 10/19

For each of the following cases, answer the same 3 questions: (i) Is Dowty's theory as it is stated in the 1991 paper compatible with the lexicalizations we see in English, and why? (ii) Does it predict the particular lexicalizations we see in English, and why? That is, given the meanings of the different alternants, is the way the argument structure is lexicalized the only one the theory predicts? And (iii) if not, how could the theory be amended to predict them? Obviously as long as the theory works, you won't need to answer (iii); when answering (iii), you *may* find it helpful to consider similar verbs.

Case 1 Look at the simple transitive form of "bake":

- (1) Alfonso baked a cake.

Case 2 These verbs are similar to "load"/"spray" verbs:

- (2) Alfonso crammed the suitcase with the clothes.
- (3) Alfonso crammed the clothes into the suitcase.

Note that this will require you to think about incremental themes, even though we never got to discussing them in class. Please ask if you are struggling with them.

Case 3 When calculating proto-role entailments, we considered only 3-argument alternants of "buy"/"sell". For this case, look at them in their full glory with the "amount" role included. (For writing up the homework you can assume the calculation we did in class, and need not write up the proto-role entailments for the buyer/seller/goods roles in answer to the "why" part.)

- (4) Alfonso bought the piano from Joanna for \$2000.
- (5) Joanna sold the piano to Alfonso for \$2000.

Case 4 Now look at the transitive alternants:

- (6) \$2000 bought this piano.
- (7) This piano sold for \$2000.

Here (unlike case 2) you probably can't assume anything from the 3-argument alternant. While it may play some role in the big picture, for purposes of this question set aside the things we discussed about middle voice in class.