

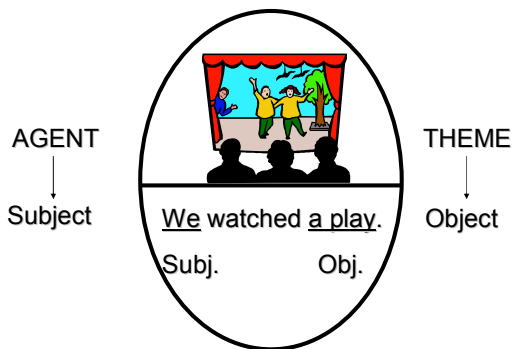
Linguistic Perspectives on English Grammar

Voice and Valence

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Hanyang-Oregon TESOL, 13th Cycle 2007

Big Idea

Voice and Valence



Voice and Valence

Argument Structure Diagrams are ways of representing both the syntactic valence of a clause and the semantic valence of the scene expressed:

AGENT	PATIENT
↓	↓
Subject	Object
MacBeth	killed Duncan.

Voice and valence

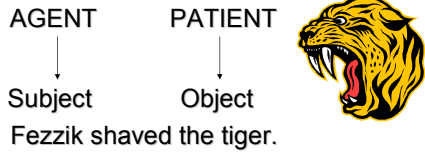
- **Valence-decreasing constructions:**
 - Those that “merge” Subject and Object: REFLEXIVES
RECIPROCALLS
(MIDDLES)
 - Those that downplay a Subject: PASSIVES
 - Those that downplay an Object: OBJECT OMISSION
OBJECT DEMOTION
OBJ. INCORPORATION
- **Valence-increasing constructions:**
 - Those that add a controlling participant: CAUSATIVES
 - Those that upgrade an IDO: DATIVE SHIFT

Voice and Valence: Reflexives

What are they?:

Voice and Valence: Reflexives

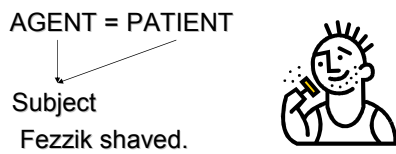
English example:



This is a *transitive* clause. It has a syntactic valence of 2, and refers to a scene that has a semantic valence of 2.

Voice and Valence: Reflexives

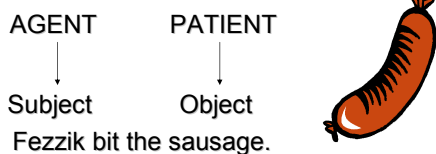
English example:



This is a *lexical* reflexive. It is *isomorphism*, because there is no change in the verb. Both semantic and syntactic valence are reduced.

Voice and Valence: Reflexives

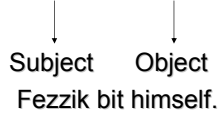
Notice that not every English verb functions like "shave":



"Fezzik bit" does not mean that Fezzik bit himself.

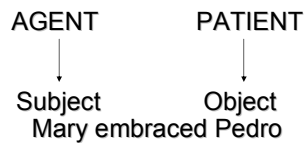
Voice and Valence: Reflexives

AGENT = PATIENT (PAGENT?)



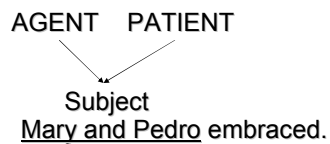
This is an *syntactic (or analytic)* reflexive. It reduces semantic valence, but *not* syntactic valence.

Voice and Valence: Reciprocals



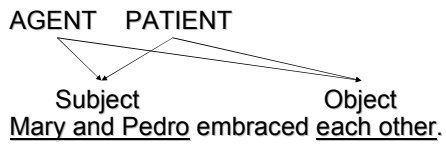
This is a 2-argument clause that expresses a 2-participant situation.

Voice and Valence: Reciprocals



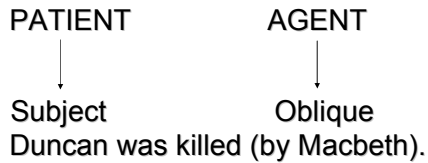
This is a *lexical* reciprocal. It is a one-argument clause that expresses a situation that involves two participants.

Voice and Valence: Reciprocals



This is a *syntactic* reciprocal. It is a 2-argument clause that expresses a situation that involves two participants, but both arguments refer to both participants.

Voice and Valence: Passives



This is a passive clause. It is a *1-argument* clause that expresses a 2-participant situation (semantic valence =2; syntactic valence = 1).

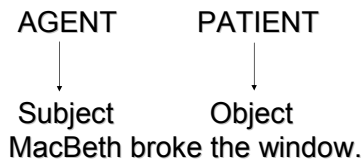
Voice and Valence: Passives

The passive construction provides a good “test” for direct object status – If something can be made into the subject of a passive, then in the non-passive version it must be the object of a transitive verb.

Voice and Valence: Passives

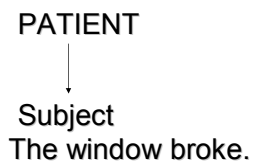
The light was turned off by Jamie.
*The road was turned off by Jamie.
This bed was slept in by George Washington.
*This dining room was eaten in by GW.
The assignment has already been passed out.
*The door has already been passed out.

Voice and Valence: Middles



This is a prototypical transitive clause. It is a 2-argument clause that expresses a 2-participant situation (semantic and syntactic valence = 2).

Voice and Valence: Middles



In a middle construction, both semantic and syntactic valence are reduce.

Voice and Valence: Middles

English also has syntactic (or analytic) middle constructions:

PATIENT



Subject

This car drives like a tank. *This car drives.

This soup eats like a meal. *This soup eats.

These trousers wear well. *These trousers wear.

Voice and Valence: Object Omission

A: Let's go get some lunch.

B: I already ate.

A: What happened to the kimchi?

B: *I already ate.

A: Where are Amy and Hyun Suk?

B: They drove to Portland.

A: Where is my car?

B: *They drove to Portland.

Voice and Valence: Object Demotion

AGENT



Subject

The hunter shot the deer.

PATIENT



Object

AGENT



Subject

The hunter shot at the deer.

PATIENT (?)



Oblique

Voice and Valence: Object Incorporation

AGENT PATIENT
↓ ↓
Subject Object
My cousin hunts foxes.

AGENT (PATIENT)
↓ ↓
Subject ↓
My cousin went fox-hunting.

Voice and Valence: Valence INCREASING
Constructions

We've seen constructions in which semantic valence, syntactic valence or both are reduced. Now we will look at two constructions in which valence is increased. Increasing syntactic valence has the communicational effect of placing a new participant "in perspective," or on "center stage" in the scene described.

Voice and Valence: Causatives

Causative constructions increase valence by adding an AGENT or other CAUSER to the scene:

Non-causative: Stephanie ate the beans.
Causative: Julian fed Stephanie the beans.
This is a *lexical* causative. Why?

Voice and Valence: Causatives

English also has syntactic causatives:

Non-causative:

Stephanie ate the beans.

Causative:

Julian made Stephanie eat the beans.

Why is this a *syntactic* causative?

Voice and Valence: Causatives

What kind of causative is this?:

Non-causative: 철수가 밥을 먹었다.

Causative: 내가 철수에게 밥을 먹였다.

Non-causative: 철수가 왔다.

Causative: 내가 철수를 오게 했다.

Voice and Valence: "Dative Shift"

A Dative Shift construction expresses a recipient as a direct object:

Non-shifted:

She gave her greatcoat to the curator.

Shifted:

She gave the curator her greatcoat.

Voice and Valence: "Dative Shift"

She gave her daughter a cookie.

She told her daughter a story.

She scrambled her daughter some eggs.

*She created her daughter a cookie.

*She explained her daughter a story.

Voice and Valence: "Dative Shift"

The shifted constituent must refer to a RECIPIENT (or "projected possessor").

She opened me a beer.

*She opened me the door.

She bought me the books.

*She dusted me the books.

Voice and Valence: "Dative Shift"

Some verbs do not allow dative shift, even though verbs with similar meanings do:

She knitted her mother a new sweater.

She crocheted her mother a new sweater.

*She decorated her mother a new sweater.

She baked her mother a cake.

*She created her mother a cake.

Voice and Valence: "Dative Shift"

Rule of thumb: One syllable verbs allow dative shift, while multi-syllable verbs do not.

Dative shift:	No dative shift:
give	donate
send	mention
lend	describe
teach	explain
tell	announce
throw	catapult
steal	deliver
toss	propel

Voice and Valence: "Dative Shift"

Like all valence adjusting constructions, Dative Shift is a tool that allows speakers to adjust the "perspective" they take on an event on the discourse stage. Subjects and objects are on "center stage," or are "in perspective." Obliques are not in perspective. They are on "side stage." Participants that are not mentioned at all are "off stage."

Voice and Valence: Dative Shift

The Dative Shift Construction provides a good "test" for indirect direct object status – If a noun preceded by "for" or "to" can be advanced to Direct Object via Dative Shift, then it must be an Indirect Object in the non-shifted sentence.
