

Understanding English Grammar: A Linguistic Introduction

Additional Exercises for Chapter 13: Voice and Valence

1. Argument structure diagrams

Draw argument structure diagrams for each of the following examples:

- a. I consider myself a bit of a loner.
- b. Phil, we're not gonna leave a baby in the room,
- c. I was smeared by the Pentagon.
- d. Get used to disappointment.
- e. He roped himself a couple of sea turtles.
- f. This soup eats like a meal.
- g. You enter into a code of ethics with the university, not with each other.
- h. Do we understand each other?

2. Valence adjusted constructions

Find an example of each of the following constructions in an English newsmagazine newspaper, or internet news site. Provide an argument structure diagram for each one:

- a. An analytic reciprocal construction.
- b. An analytic causative construction.
- c. A passive voice construction.
- d. An object omission, object demotion or object incorporation construction.
- e. A lexical reflexive construction
- f. Use of an emphatic reflexive pronoun that does *not* express reflexivity.
- g. A lexical middle construction.
- h. An analytic middle construction. (This may be the most difficult example to find.)

3. Active, Passive or . . . ?

Indicate whether each of the following examples is Active voice, Passive voice, or neither. As usual, there may be some tricky examples here!

- a. Timing isn't my strong suit.
- b. People have carved their names on it.
- c. It's held in place by a large rock.
- d. I have a voice!
- e. My husband's work involves a great deal of public speaking.
- f. Will their Majesties be staying for dinner?
- g. I believe sucking smoke into your lungs will kill you.
- h. My physicians say it relaxes the throat.
- i. They're idiots.
- j. They've all been knighted.
- k. Makes it official then.
- i. Apparently she has certain skills - acquired at an establishment in Shanghai.

4. Reflexive, emphatic, or . . . ?

Indicate whether each of these constructions containing reflexive pronouns is an example of a "true reflexive", an "emphatic reflexive" or neither one (a "non-standard reflexive").

- a. I am your king. . . . No you're not, you told me so yourself.
- b. I don't want to perjure myself.
- c. How do you distinguish yourself in a population of people who all got 1600 on their SATs?
- d. To be sure you are Lucifer himself in the shape of my master.
- e. That in itself is startling.
- f. Besides, Mr. Williams, who would waste themselves on such a miserable wretch?
- g. The Duchess says there WAS a vague discussion about how bad things were between herself and Andrew.
- h. Maybe in 10 years I'll have a family myself.

5. Make up your own sentences

Invent one or more coherent English sentences that match each of the following descriptions. Please do not use any examples found on this problem sheet or in the text.

- a. A lexical reciprocal construction.
- b. An analytic middle construction related to the transitive expression: "People peel oranges."
- c. A passive voice construction with a LOCATION as the subject.
- d. A lexical causative construction related to the expression: "The book lay on the table."
- e. A passive voice construction related to the expression: "The book lay on the table."
- f. An analytic causative construction with a transitive caused situation.
- g. An Object demotion construction in which the object is not completely affected by the action described by the verb.
- h. Three sentences illustrating the verb "break" in three different argument structure frames.
- i. A dative shift construction based on a two syllable verb.
- j. An object incorporation construction based on the verb "climb".