

HG2002: Tutorial 9

Componential Analysis

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1. Using semantic components, analyze the following words:

son, daughter, child, mother, father, parent, grandfather, grandmother, grandparent

Discuss whether a binary format would be an advantage here.

You may use two place relations in your descriptions (e.g. [SIBLING-OF[X,Y]]).

If you speak a language that makes additional distinctions in this area, also describe them (e.g. maternal grandmother, ...).

2. Which of the following participate in the **causative/inchoative alternation**.

- (1) *The goalkeeper bounced the ball.*
- (2) *The assassin murdered the general.*
- (3) *The waiter melted the chocolate.*
- (4) *Charlie built the new swimming pool.*
- (5) *The people lowered the boat.*
- (6) *Kim worried Sandy.*
- (7) *The censors destroyed the film.*
- (8) *Jo dried the clothes.*

For those verbs that do undergo the alternation, translate them into a language of your choice and report on whether the translations undergo a similar alternation.

3. Levin and Rapaport Hovav (1995: 102–5) argue that transitive verbs which do not undergo the **causative/inchoative alternation** need an intentional and volitional Agent. In contrast, verbs that undergo this alternation should also allow a non-Agent subject:

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| (a) <i>John broke the window with a rock</i> | Agent Subject |
| (b) <i>The rock broke the window</i> | Non-Agent (Instrument) Subject |
| (c) <i>The window broke</i> | Inchoative Alternation |

Test this hypothesis on the sentences from Question 2.

4. Consider the following semantic and syntactic tests for countability:

- Semantic: Can it be divided and still use the same name (**divisibility**):
 - Mass: *half some gold is gold*
 - Count: *half a dog is not a dog*
- Syntactic: does it co-occur with *much* or *many* (**enumerability**):
 - Mass: *I don't have much gold*
 - Count: *I don't have many dogs*

Classify the following nouns using these tests:

monkey, program, software, chair, furniture, beer, icecream, curry, chocolate, chicken, salmon, potato, rice, oats, mink

Do the tests always give unique results? If not, why not?

Acknowledgments These questions are partially based on exercises from Saeed (2003).