

Voice

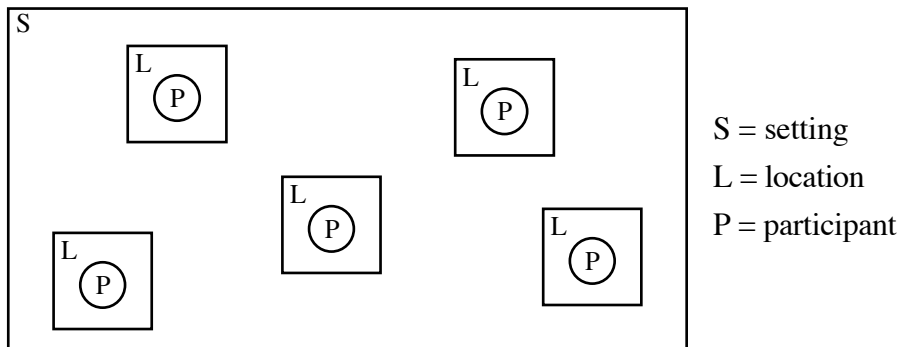
- A. Basic Notions
- B. Prominence
- C. Specificity
- D. Definite Impersonals

A. Basic Notions

- (1) The notion **voice** will be interpreted quite broadly. In a conceptual characterization, classic voice distinctions—notably active vs. passive—are part of a much wider spectrum of related grammatical phenomena.

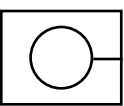
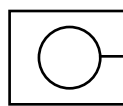
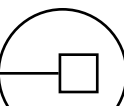
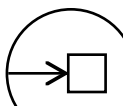
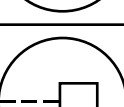
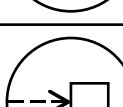
Conceptual Archetypes

(2)



(3)

(a)

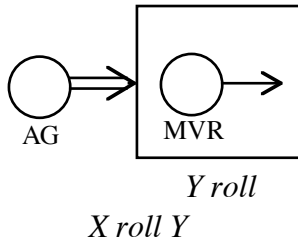
Location	 <i>stand</i>	 <i>sink</i>
Property	 <i>tall</i>	 <i>grow</i>
Experience	 <i>happy</i>	 <i>awaken</i>
	Static	Dynamic

(b)

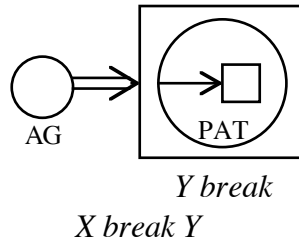
Zero	Mover
	Patient
Experiencer	
Theme	

(4)

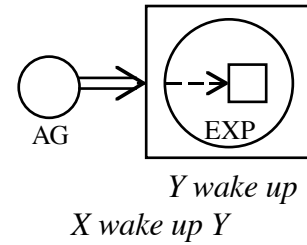
(a) Caused Motion



(b) Caused Change

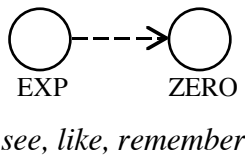


(c) Caused Experience

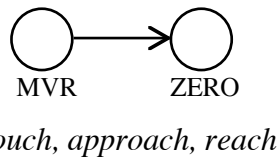


(5)

(a) Mental Interaction

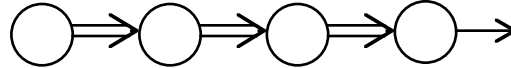


(b) Spatial Interaction

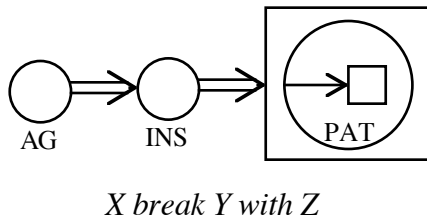


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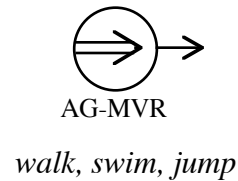
(a) Action Chain



(b) Instrumental Causation



(c) Role Conflation



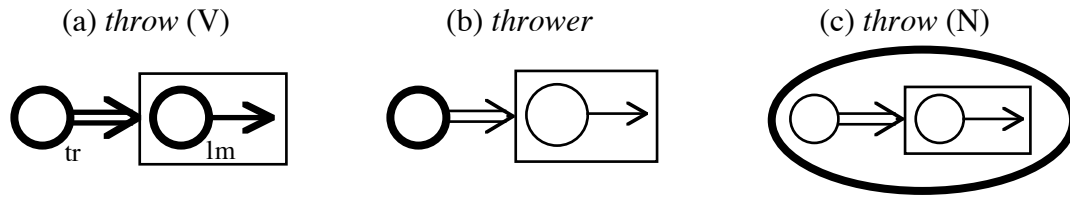
Descriptive Constructs

(7)(a) Lexicon, morphology, and syntax form a continuum fully describable as assemblies of **symbolic structures**, each the pairing of a semantic and a phonological structure.

(b) An expression's **maximal scope** (MS) is the full array of content evoked as the basis for its meaning. Its **immediate scope** (IS) is the general locus of attention ("onstage region").

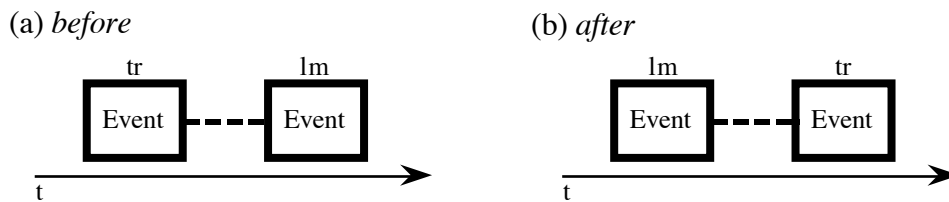
(c) An expression's **profile** is the onstage element singled out as the specific focus of attention—the entity it designates (its conceptual referent). Either a *thing* or a *relationship* can be profiled.

(8)



(9) Two kinds of **prominence** are *profiling* and *trajector/landmark status*. A **trajector** (tr) is the *primary focal participant* in a profiled relationship. A **landmark** (lm) is a *secondary focal participant*.

(10)



(11) Descriptive constructs justified semantically also prove essential to grammar:

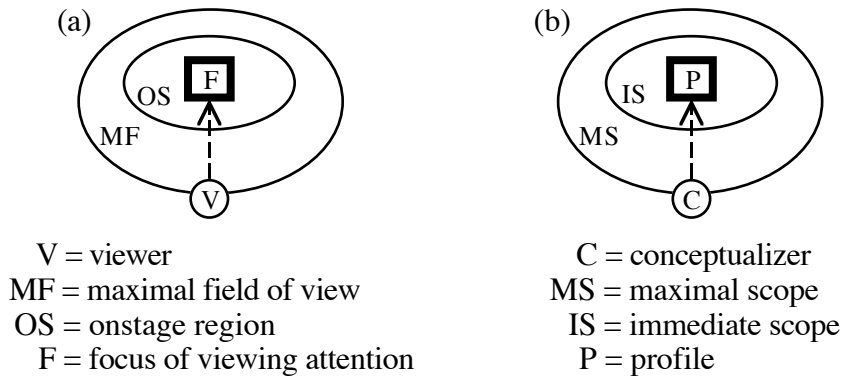
- (a) An expression's *profile* determines its **grammatical category**.
 - (i) A *noun* profiles a **thing** (defined abstractly).
 - (ii) A *verb* profiles a **process**, i.e. a relationship *scanned sequentially* in its evolution through time.
 - (iii) Adjectives, adverbs, and prepositions profile relationships apprehended **holistically**.
- (b) A **subject** is a nominal expression specifying the trajector of a profiled relationship. An **object** specifies a landmark.

(12) Fundamental grammatical notions have both a **schematic** semantic characterization (one valid for all instances) and a semantic **prototype**. The former reside in cognitive operations (e.g. conceptual reification, sequential scanning, conferring of focal prominence), the latter in conceptual archetypes (e.g. physical object, agent-patient interaction).

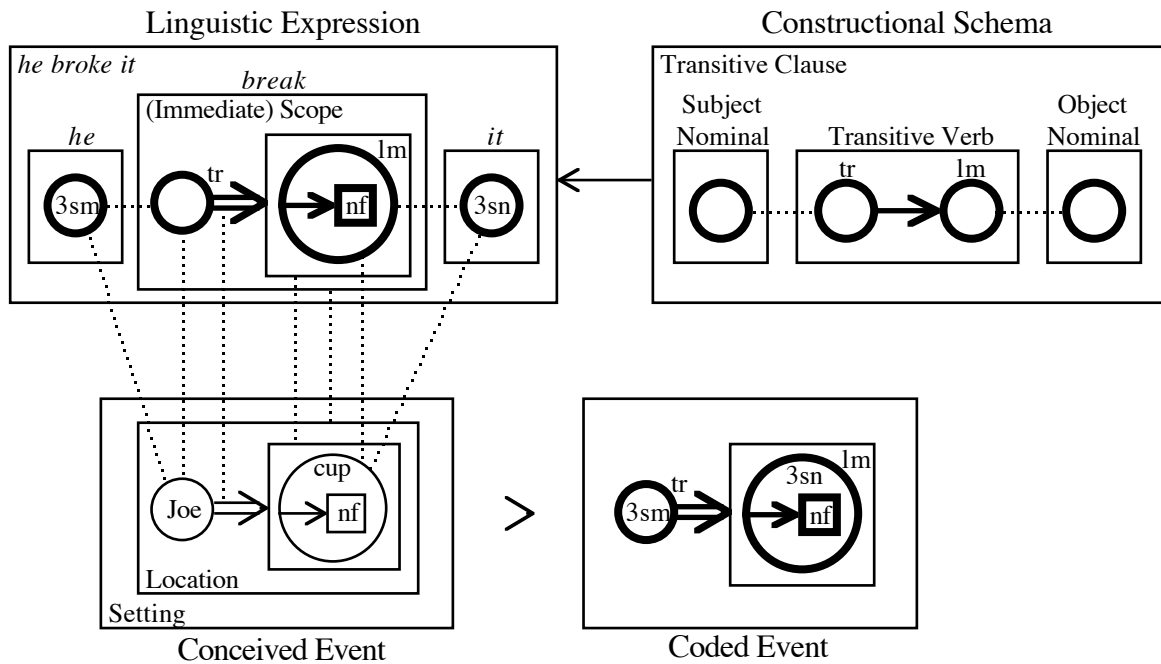
(13) A lexical noun or verb specifies a **type** of thing or process. A nominal (i.e. noun phrase) or a finite clause profiles a **grounded instance** of a thing or process type.

Alignment

(14)



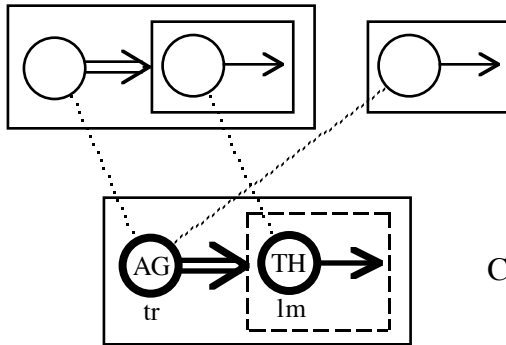
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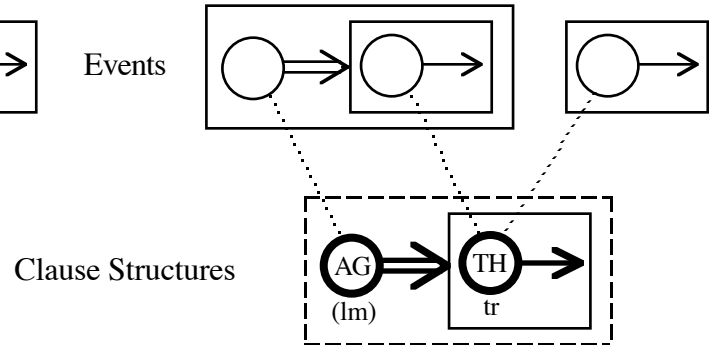
(16) *In the kitchen, Ken was chopping celery on the counter with a cleaver.*

(17)

(a) Agent-Oriented Canonical Alignment



(b) Theme-Oriented Canonical Alignment

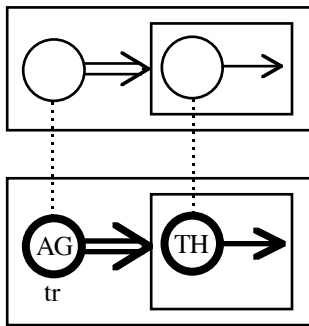


B. Prominence

Trajector Choice

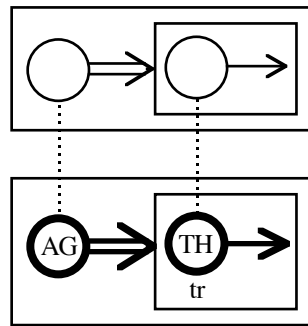
(18)

(a) Agent-Oriented Canonical Alignment



Theme-Oriented Alternative Alignment (antipassive)

(b) Theme-Oriented Canonical Alignment



Agent-Oriented Alternative Alignment (passive)

(19)(a) *Someone stole our car last night.*(b) *the car stolen last night*(c) *Our car {was/got} stolen last night.*

(20)(a) *Na tipi e le tama le ufi.* 'The boy cut the yam.' [Samoan]
 PAST cut ERG the boy the yam

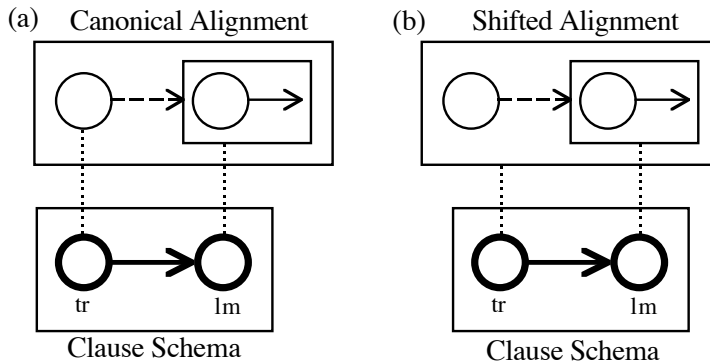
(b) *Na tipi le ufi e le tama.* 'The yam was cut by the boy.'
 PAST cut the yam ERG the boy

- (21)(a) *Mag-salis ang babae ng bigas sa sako para sa bata.* [Tagalog]
 AF-will:take:out TR woman ART rice LOC sack BEN child
 ‘The woman will take some rice out of {a/the} sack for {a/the} child.’
- (b) *Aalis-in ng babae ang bigas sa sako para sa bata.*
 will:take:out-TF ART woman TR rice LOC sack BEN child
 ‘{A/The} woman will take the rice out of {a/the} sack for {a/the} child.’
- (c) *Aalis-an ng babae ng bigas ang sako para sa bata.*
 will:take:out-LF ART woman ART rice TR sack BEN child
 ‘{A/The} woman will take some rice out of the sack for {a/the} child.’
- (d) *Ipag-salis ng babae ng bigas sa sako ang bata.*
 BF-will:take:out ART woman ART rice LOC sack TR child
 ‘{A/The} woman will take some rice out of {a/the} sack for the child.’

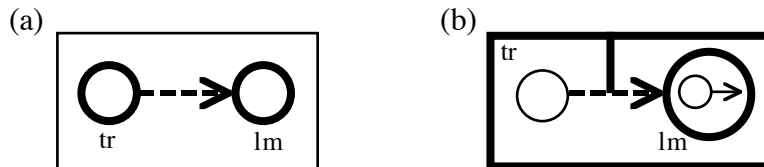
Profile Adjustment

- (22)(a) *Soldiers destroyed the village.*
 (b) *The village was destroyed (by soldiers).*
- (23)(a) *The refugees have {seen/witnessed} some traumatic events.*
 (b) *{This country/The last decade} has {seen/witnessed} some traumatic events.*

(24)



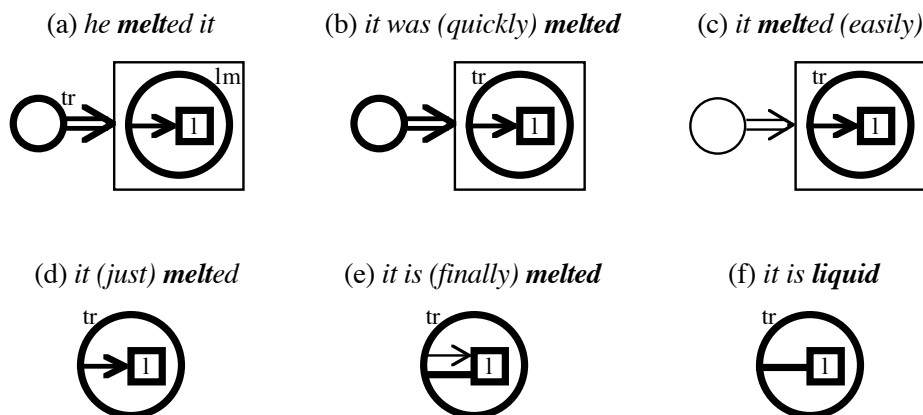
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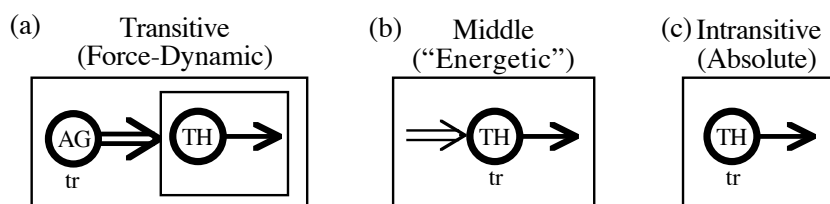
- (26)(a) *Some traumatic events have been {seen/witnessed} by the refugees.*
 (b) **Some traumatic events have been {seen/witnessed} by {this country/the last decade}.*

- (27)(a) *The garden is swarming with bees.*
 (b) *The nighttime sky was blazing with forest fires.*
 (c) *The whole town was ringing with church bells.*
 (d) *My cat is crawling with fleas.*

(28)

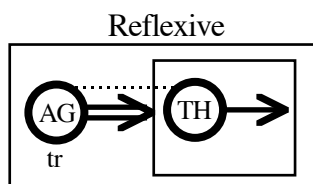


(29)



- (30)(a)(i) *El ratero ahogó al anciano.* 'The thief drowned the old man.' [Spanish]
 (ii) *El anciano se ahogó.* 'The old man drowned.'
 (b)(i) *El ruido lo molesta.* 'The noise bothers him.'
 (ii) *Se molestó con el ruido.* 'He was bothered by the noise.'
 (c)(i) *Pedro subió la escalera.* 'Peter went up the stairs.'
 (ii) *Pedro se subió a la mesa (de un salto).* 'Peter got up on the table (in one jump).'
 (d)(i) *En el otoño, las hojas caen de los árboles.* 'In the autumn, leaves fall from the trees.'
 (ii) *En la primavera, las hojas se cayeron de los árboles.* 'In the spring, leaves fell off the trees.'
 (e)(i) *Miró a su hija.* 'He looked at his daughter.'
 (ii) *Se miró en el espejo.* 'He looked at himself in the mirror.'

(31)



Landmark Choice

(32)(a) *She mailed a package to her daughter.* (b) *She mailed her daughter a package.*

(33)(a) *Y-a-andits-e ibaruwa n-ikaramu.* ‘He wrote the letter with a pen.’ [Rwanda]
he-PAST-write-ASP letter with-pen

(b) *Y-a-andik-ish-ije ikaramu ibaruwa.* ‘He wrote-with the pen the letter.’
he-PAST-write-IF-ASP pen letter

(c) *Karoli y-a-koz-e ku-mafaranga.* ‘Charles worked for money.’
Charles he-PAST-work-ASP for-money

(d) *Karoli y-a-kor-e-ye amafaranga.* ‘Charles worked-for the money.’
Charles he-PAST-work-GF-ASP money

C. Specificity

(34) Absence of *focal prominence* and absence of *specificity* are mutually reinforcing strategies of defocusing. Each detracts from the optimal circumstances for viewing a given participant: the situation of a single, clearly delimited, fully identified individual put onstage as the specific focus of attention.

(35)(a) *The thief was caught (by an alert security guard).*

(b) **The garden is swarming.* [cf. (27)(a)]

(c) **The last decade has witnessed some traumatic events by Americans.* [cf. (23)(b)]

(36) *The soldiers went on a rampage—they killed, they destroyed, they raped and pillaged.*

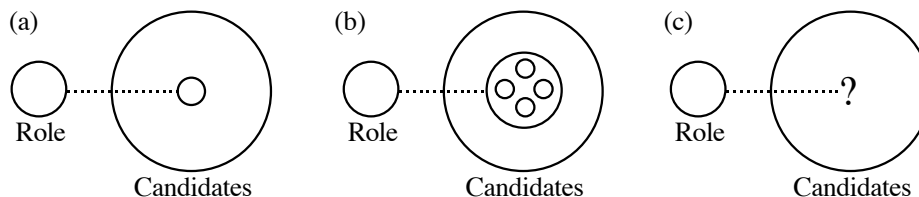
Full Unspecificity

(37)(a) *Pa'ka-ngu-'tu'a-yi =anga.* ‘[One] is killing him.’ [Southern Paiute]
kill-PNCT-IMPRS-PRES=him

(b) *Ti'ka-'ka-'tu'a-yi .* ‘[People] are eating.’
eat-PL:SUBJ-IMPRS-PRES

(38) *Taaqa-t niina-ya.* ‘[They] killed the man.’ [Hopi]
man-OBJ kill-PL:SUBJ

(39)

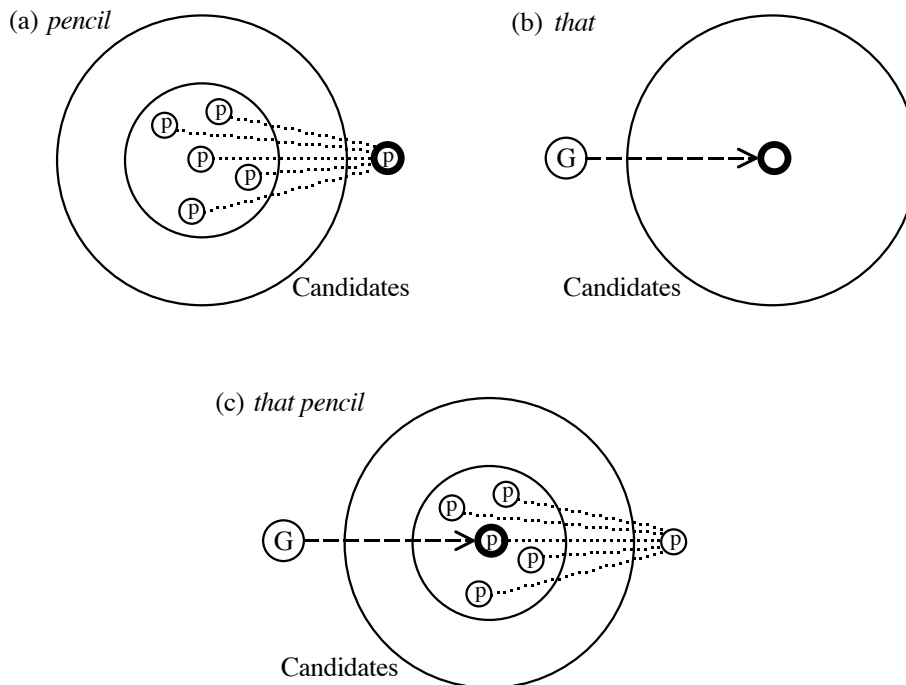


- (40)(a) *This truck steers quite easily.*
 (b) *The truck steered quite easily (*by the workman).*

Nominal Organization

- (41)(a) A lexical noun specifies a **type** of thing. A **nominal** (i.e. a full NP) profiles a **grounded instance** of some type.
 (b) The **ground** (G) comprises the speech event, its participants, and its immediate circumstances (e.g. the time and place of speaking).
 (c) **Grounding** is a grammaticized means of indicating how a profiled thing or process relates to the ground with respect to certain fundamental, “epistemic” notions (e.g. time, reality, identification).

(42)

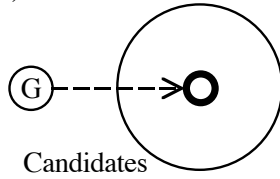


- (43)(a) Both *definite* and *indefinite* determiners function as grounding elements.
 (b) A *definite* nominal is taken as being sufficient to single out the intended referent, at the current stage of the discourse, **independently** of the clause containing it.
 (c) An *indefinite* nominal has a kind of **virtuality** with respect to the range of candidate instances: it instructs the hearer to “conjure up” (i.e. imagine) an instance of the type, **pending** the information provided by the clause containing it.
- (44)(a) *Jill broke the pencil.* [particular pencil, identity established independently]
 (b) *Jill needs the pencil.* [particular pencil, identity established independently]
 (c) *Jill broke a pencil.* [particular pencil, identity established by the clause]
 (d) *Jill needs a pencil.* [no particular pencil singled out (non-specific)]

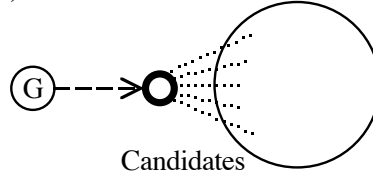
(45) *Jill needs {the/a} pencil—and she needs it now.*

(46)

(a) Definite



(b) Indefinite



Non-Definite Impersonals

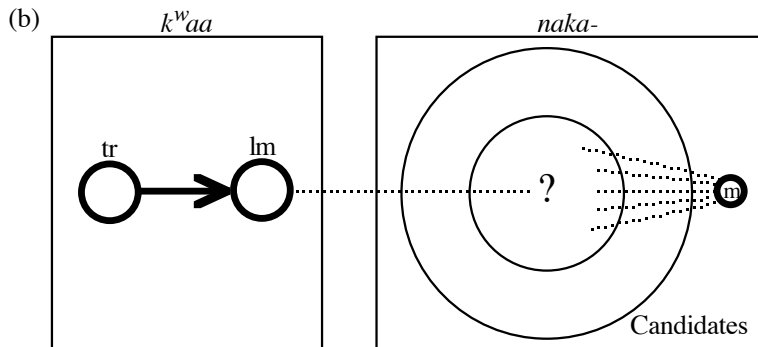
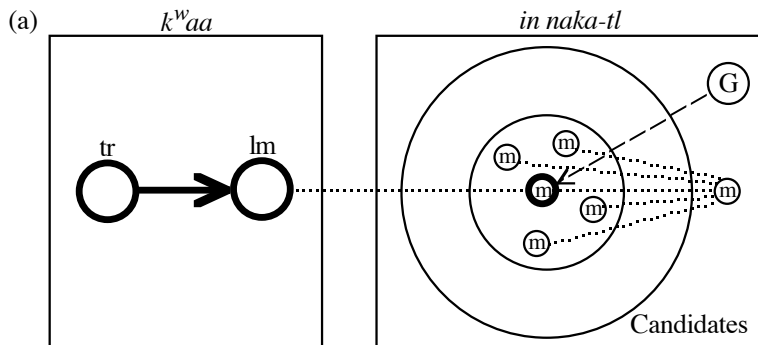
(47) *With this flea-collar your cat will be flealess.*

(48)(a) *Ni-k^{waa}-s in naka-tl.* 'I will eat the meat.'
I-it-eat-FUT ART meat-ABS

[Classical Nahuatl]

(b) *Ni-naka-k^{waa}-s.* 'I will eat meat.'
I-meat-eat-FUT

(49)



(50) [schematic] ... *stuff* > *food* > *meat* > *pork* > *bacon* ... [specific]

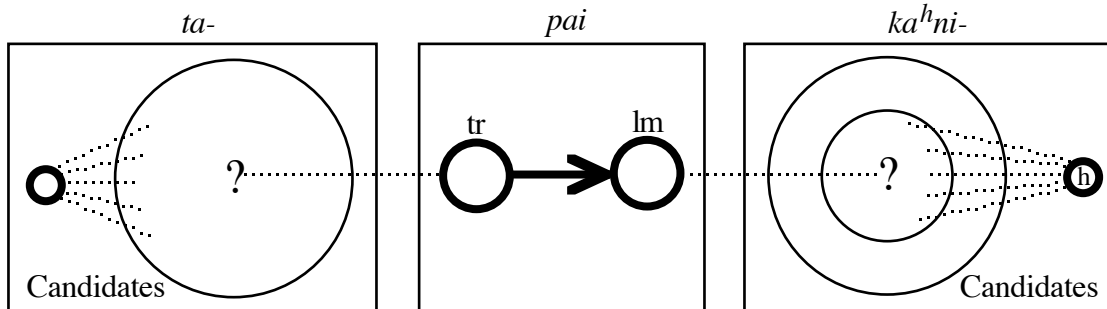
(51)(a) *Ni-tla-k^waa-s.* 'I will eat.'
I-NH-eat-FUT

[Classical Nahuatl]

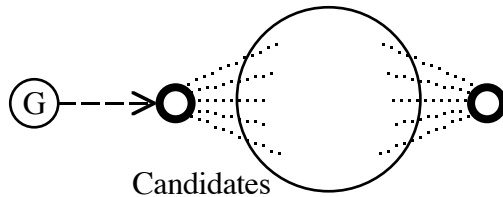
(b) *Ta-ka^hni-pai.* '[One] has [a] house.'
UNSPEC:SUBJ-house-have

[Shoshoni]

(52)



(53) Indefinite Pronoun



(54)(a) *Someone* broke my watch. *He's* going to regret it.

(b) **One* broke my watch. *He's* going to regret it.

(c) *One* is never as rich as {*he/one*} would like to be.

D. Definite Impersonals

(55)(a) *We* cannot predict the future.

(b) *You* never know when tragedy will strike.

(c) *They* say that getting old has the sole advantage of being better than the alternative.

(d) *It* seems that life is always difficult.

Delimitation

(56)(a) **Selection/singling out:** the process of directing attention to an instance of some type (as a profiled nominal referent), i.e. *choosing* an instance.

(b) **Delimitation:** how the profiled instance projects to the world (or the relevant universe of discourse); the *size (extension)* of the instance itself or the pool of *eligible candidates* (those conforming to the type specification).

- (57)(a) *A zinc atom can be found at several **places** in this molecule.*
 (b) *That's a good **place** to put the vase.*
 (c) *They're looking for a suitable **place** to build a shopping mall.*
 (d) *Beijing is an interesting **place**.*
 (e) *The world has become a very hostile **place**.*
 (f) *The universe is a very big **place**.*

- (58)(a) *Put the vase right **here**.*
 (b) *We should build the garage right **here**.*
 (c) *Things are rapidly changing **here** in China.*
 (d) ***Here** in our solar system there is only one habitable planet.*
 (e) *Everything in the universe has a reason for being **here**.*

- (59)(a) *Hand it to me right **now**!*
 (b) ***Now** we can pay our debts.*
 (c) *The earth is habitable **now** but won't be much longer.*
 (d) *The universe is very different **now** than in its formative stages.*

Vagueness

- (60)(a) ***This** is getting us nowhere.*
 (b) ***That**'s the trouble with you academics.*
 (c) *What's **this** about your getting married?*
 (d) ***That**'s not fair!*

Plural Pronouns

- (61)(a) ***We** have a lot of earthquakes in California.*
 (b) ***You** have a lot of hurricanes in Florida.*
 (c) ***They** have a lot of tornadoes in Kansas.*
- (62)(a) *California has a lot of earthquakes.*
 (b) *Florida has a lot of hurricanes.*
 (c) *Kansas has a lot of tornadoes.*
- (63)(a) ***We** just had a nice one-on-one conversation.*
 (b) ***We** can now understand the impersonal use of plural pronouns.*
 (c) ***We** have the right to exploit the world's resources at the expense of everybody else.*
 (d) ***We** are not alone. [I.e. there is other intelligent life in the universe.]*
- (64)(a) ***They** met in Istanbul.*
 (b) ***They** didn't fund my grant.*
 (c) *In generative grammar, **they** claim that syntax is autonomous.*
 (d) ***They** say it's never too late to learn new skills.*

Impersonal it

(65) *It* is “a ‘definite’ nominal with almost the greatest possible generality of meaning, limited only in the sense that it is ‘neuter’ ... it embraces weather, time, circumstance, whatever is obvious by the nature of reality or the implications of context ... Our mistake has been to confuse generality of meaning with lack of meaning.” (Bolinger 1977: 84-85)

(66)(a) *Impersonal it* uses of *it* represent extreme cases of vagueness and non-delimitation, but nonetheless conform to its general meaning.

(b) Impersonal *it* profiles the conceptualizer’s **scope of awareness** for the issue at hand.

(c) Though it may be spatially or temporally interpreted, the scope of awareness is basically an **abstract setting**.

(67)(a) *It* was {raining/snowing/foggy/cold} last night.

(b) *It’s* our wedding anniversary.

(c) *It’s* awkward when your wife meets your lover.

(d) *It’s* obvious that our leaders cannot be trusted.

(68)(a) *I’m* certain that she’s avoiding me.

(b) *It’s* certain that she’s avoiding me.

(69) The *primary focal prominence* constituting trajector status resides in the trajector being invoked as the **starting point** (or *initial reference point*) in mentally accessing the profiled relationship. Setting-subjects can serve a *presentational* function and are commonly used in existential expressions.

(70)(a) *Een hond blaft.* ‘A dog barks.’ [Dutch]

a dog barks

(b) *Er blaft een hond.* ‘There barks a dog (there).’

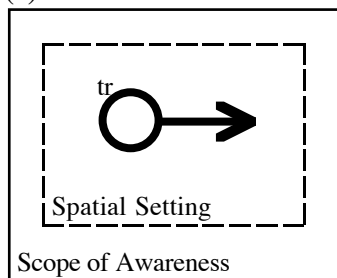
there barks a dog

(c) *Er worden overtreders vervolgd.* ‘Trespassers are being prosecuted (there).’

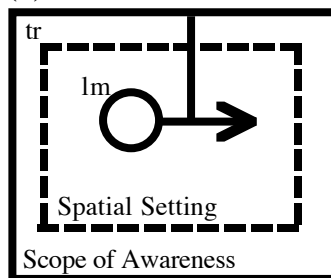
there become trespassers prosecuted

(71)

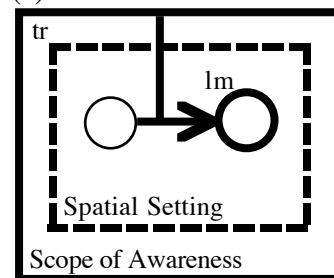
(a)



(b)



(c)



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