

# Frame-based constructional approach to argument structure satisfaction via unselected adjuncts

Seiko Fujii\* & Russell Lee-Goldman\*\*  
University of Tokyo\*  
sfujii @ boz.c.u-tokyo.ac.jp\*, rleegold @ gmail.com\*\*

Keywords: Construction Grammar, Frame Semantics, FrameNet, adjunct, argument structure

This paper presents cases in English and Japanese of unselected adjuncts satisfying argument structure, arguing for an approach that combines construction grammar and frame semantics. Traditional approaches to argument structure (AS) combine lexical or constructional specification with general principles on the role realization (Fillmore 1968, Goldberg 2005, Grimshaw 1990). We argue for another mechanism: unselected adjuncts may provide semantic content sufficient to satisfy AS requirements. The account continues the effort of Goldberg & Ackerman (2001) of recognizing disparate phenomena (focus, relevance, and presupposition) that contribute to argument structure well-formedness. We couch our account in frame semantics, in particular recognizing core and non-core roles. (Fillmore 1982, Matsumoto 1997, Fillmore & Baker 2009).

In case 1, extraposed temporal clauses satisfy a core role. FrameNet's Stimulus\_focus frame (embarrassing, funny) allows an extraposed STIMULUS (1), but equivalent information can be realized as a (non-core) temporal modifier that mentions the emotion-causing event (2).

In case 2, we see the in-that-X construction, which provides specification/elaboration on a predicate (3). Consider the Similarity and Uniqueness frames: they have a core PARAMETER role, which if not overt is interpreted as indefinite (4). Including in-that satisfies this requirement (5). In-that-X contributes the same meaning in (3) and (5), while filling a core semantic requirement in (5).

In case 3, Japanese adjunct *node* ('because') clauses are used with communication frames such as Telling and Warning. Examples in (6, 7) show the *node* clause conveying the reason for the speech act as well as its content, i.e., the core role MESSAGE, which is syntactically absent.

These patterns add a new category to the growing list of ways to create well-formed clauses. The range of lexical and syntactic patterns motivates combining language-specific constructions with general frame-semantic principles to understand how core AS requirements are satisfied. This supports viewing AS as integrating inferential processes against a rich background of lexical meaning.

- (1) It was embarrassing [that he came into my room / for him to have come into my room].
- (2) It was embarrassing [when he came into my room].
- (3) The tree is tall [in that most other examples of its species are extremely short].
- (4) Their proposals are similar/unique (in some indefinite/unspecified way).
- (5) This proposal is similar/unique [in that it requires an unprecedented amount of money].
- (6) *X kyoozyu gosonpu Y ni okaremasite wa #-gatu #-niti ni goseikyo saremasita node tutusinde osirase itasimasu.* [Lit. 'Because Prof. X's father Y passed away on [date], (we) inform/tell (you).']  
We respectfully inform you that Profesor xxx's father yyy passed away on [month/date].
- (7) *X-eki made tomarimasen node go-tyuui kudasai*  
station till stop-POL-NEG **because** be.careful POL [Lit. 'Because this train will not stop until X-station, be careful.'] Be warned that this train will not stop until it stops at X-station.

## Selected References

- Fillmore, Charles J. (1968). The Case for Case. In Bach, E. W. & Harms, R. T. (eds.) *Universals in Linguistic Theory*. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1-88.
- Fillmore, Charles J. (1982). Frame Semantics. *Linguistics in the Morning Calm*. Seoul: Hanshin, 111-137.
- Fillmore, Charles J. & Collin F. Baker (2009). A Frames Approach to Semantic Analysis. In *The Oxford Handbook of Linguistic Analysis*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Goldberg, Adele E. (2005). Argument realization: The role of constructions, lexical semantics and discourse factors. In Östman, J.-O. & Fried, M. (eds.) *Construction Grammars: Cognitive grounding and theoretical extensions*, Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Goldberg, Adele E., & Ackerman, Farrell (2001). The pragmatics of obligatory adjuncts. *Language Vol.* 77, No. 4, 798-814.
- Grimshaw, Jane. (1990). *Argument Structure*. Cambridge: MIT Press
- Matsumoto, Yoshiko. (1997). *Noun-Modifying Constructions in Japanese: A Frame Semantic Approach*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.