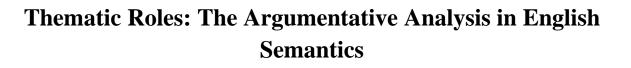**Kurdistan Regional Government-Iraq**

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Thematic Roles: The Argumentative Analysis in English Semantics

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Thematic Roles: The Argumentative Analysis in English Semantics

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Abstract

The study above synthesized three academic works on the subject of thematic roles in the English language. The investigation was carried out by researchers of different countries in 2019, 2001, and 1995. It is crucial to understand how sentence components work together and contribute to an inner meaning of the sentence. In cognitive science, there are opposing views on the nature of roles of things like "Agent" and "Patient." Some researchers observe them as a manifestation of our direct understanding, but others see them as mental abstractions with no psychological context.

The presented findings have been revealed that the use of thematic roles for the structure of syntactic constructions and linking arguments has some limitations, which underlines the necessity of a semantic analysis of argument interpretation that would comply with the theoretical views on meaning. Furthermore, the semantic formation of sentences is based on the schematic relationship of semantic ties, thus representing the definition of how participants in the event refer to the described actions.

Thematic relations help to achieve a deeper understanding of the meanings transmitted through the sentences. This paper provides a thoughtful analysis of multiple English thematic roles theories, combining an abundant overview of literature and empirical research. As a result, it contributes to the broader coverage of thematic relations and their impact on meaning and language perception.

Key words: thematic roles, cognitive science, syntactic constructions, empirical research.

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1 Introduction

In the fields of linguistics and cognitive science, the concepts of Agent, Patient, and Goal are widely recognized. Take, for example, the action of eating, which involves a doer, the eater, and an object being eaten, corresponding to the roles of Agent and Patient. Thematic roles are central to research on language structure and meaning, how people produce and comprehend it, and how children learn to use it (Carey, 2009)Many diets have contributed to these roles, which experts claim are naturally occurring and universally applicable to every culture and have major consequences for the origin of the language They (Fillmore, Charles J , Holt et al, 1968) play such a crucial role, many theories characterizing these roles lack a structure making their development impossible to distinguish between under different conditions.

Thematic roles are not only linguistic but are observed in cognitive research carried out on infants and adults, proving its significance beyond language. The roles influence how we think of and structure language syntax. Concepts such as the primitive predicate "Agent" are crucial to this topic among generative grammarians since the notion is essential to sentence meaning. For example, Jim drank champagne suggests an eventuality where Jim is the agent. Different grammatical structures are used to express the agentive role in language (Newmeyer, 2010)

Thematic roles may appear somewhat hypothetical; it is no less real than any other human concept. They are interlanguage and must thus give theoretical definition and experimental evidence. One theory I am aware posits that they work when the brain evolves by combining the pre-existing mental representation of sound and meaning with linguistic form. The nativist view is unambiguous about the existence of some stable roles such as Agent. Roles differ from word meanings in that while they are more complex, subtle, and relevant in different lingual configurations, word meanings are always fitted to guarantee the cell be suffced. The claim that Patient is a more spread-out category than Agent is supported by the findings (Hafri, 2018)mentioned above. The results on agents and patients have led others to the broader conclusion that thematic roles as a phenomenon belong to core knowledge (Ziegler, 2018)investigated these two hypotheses regarding the relationship between goals and recipients. In a sentence production study with English-speaking adults, they found that if a goal was the first discourse reference during the production of a sentence

mentioning a goal and a recipient, then the recipient was also the first discourse reference in a sentence describing the event. Vice versa, but not (Strickland, 2016).

The complexity of correlating events with language further implies that it is impossible to attribute certain events to specific thematic roles directly. The objective of this exploration is therefore to contribute to the understanding of the vital role thematic roles focus in the overall process of the interplay of language and cognition and its implications for foundations of sentential form, meaning, comprehension, and cognitive development.

2.   Main body/Summary section

2.1.   Theoretical background

The study of thematic roles within the realm of linguistics, highlighted through the contributions of Rissman and Majid (2019), Lopez (2001), and Parsons (1995), delves into how we grasp, produce, and understand the meaning of language. Each piece of research brings unique perspectives on how these roles are conceptualized and depicted, utilizing varying methods and theoretical approaches.

In their 2019 study, Rissman and Majid took part in the debate concerning the roots of thematic roles as well as the spread of this phenomenon. They argued whether thematic roles are something rooted in our cognition or, conversely, only come with linguistic interaction. They put forth the view that some evidence seems to suggest that certain roles, such as 'Agent', are more biologically ingrained, although this is not the case for all, suggesting a combination of fluid conceptual thought and linguistic experience that go into shaping their formation. The work in finds that children using home sign languages do and will categorize tools, although exactly how they mentally classify these categories is not purely straightforward.

Their agreement, however, is more with López from 2001, who doubts whether the derivative can be "claimed" to be the root, and emphasizes the need for deep research about the existence of thematical roles, the focus on varied language studies and processing information experiments. Drawing from Lopez's work in 2001, it looks at the relationship between arguments in a single sentence, with thematic roles, and with meaning representations, comparing two competing views of what meaning is. Specifically reviewing a range of linguistic theory and methodology to determine how different languages represent themed roles and then apply it to sentence structure and interpretation response data. Another perspective about language and thought adopts a direct linking hypothesis "through which

language is built up by linking linguistic forms to universal, pre-existing representations of sound and meaning" (Hespos, 2004)**.**

One example is that processing of the sentence the journalist checked the spelling is faster than that of the mechanic checked the spelling (Bickel, 2014)This analysis makes use of direct mappings between particular event structures and particular syntactic positions rather than the use of abstract roles. Despite emerging consensus and disagreement, the current exploration proposes various readings of these roles within different linguistic theories, it warns about the importance of considering both kernels of ideas and ideas themselves, as well as mental representations and real-world references in unlocking thematic roles (Croft, 2012)**.** Parsons 1995 adds his findings to the semantic theory of thematic relationships to make their classification more transparent and accurate.

In hopes of addressing previous theories' criticism, Parsons studies the "semantics of the arguments of verbs" in an attempt to highlight the greatest language use and interpretation of objects and events' relationships. This further suggests that, while all these studies have common elements in research, which include thematic roles' complexity as well as their ability to play a crucial part in language use and understanding, they also have specific differences.

While they advocate for evidence-based and comparative research including language studies, their methodologies are different. Rissman and Majid take a multidisciplinary approach that combines cognitive psychology, linguistics including language studies and theories, other language-influenced factors, and related disciplines to further investigate the essence and universality of thematic roles. In contrast, Lopez contrasts three different theories on the essence of meaning and uses broad linguistic analysis of varying interlingual language connections and their speakers to investigate thematic role expression. Analyze the meanings of the English instrumental markers with and use in terms of the role s Agent and Patient, without appealing to the role Instrument (Rissman, 2017) e.g., proposed that the repertoire of role categories is the same across languages (Fillmore, 1968). This is not possible to test in the direct fashion at least not yet; see the fifth section, because the English-language experimental studies demonstrating abstract roles have not yet to my knowledge been replicated in every language (Marantz, 1984) made a further distinction between direct and indirect internal arguments only the former receives their th-role directly from the verb.

Parsons highlights the fact that semantic theory can also be used to refine our system for understanding and organizing these roles, as accomplished with a more focused semantic endeavor. Rissman and Majid also emphasize the critical need for such robust empirical data

to shore up theories about thematic roles. Similarly, in 1995 Parsons points out that, while no one doubts that people recognize thematic relations, they are very hard to define and categorize cleanly. Lopez examines how much variation there is in the interpretation of thematic roles through different linguistic theories, including the significance of both conceptual frameworks and the real-world when analyzing meaning can be represented.

In conclusion, the analysis of relevant examples of thematic roles within the study of linguistics contributes to the understanding of the complicated connections between language, thinking, and the creation of sense. Although the limited number of provided examples variegate the views on thematic roles, collectively, all the studied articles and reviewed works help acquire a profound understanding of the functional aspect of thematic roles between the lexical-semantic structure of an utterance and the interpretation and reflection of the produced speech. For the prospective investigation, interdisciplinary analysis and the verification of facts relevant to the specificity of thematic roles translation can further prove thematic roles' character and representation in various languages and cultures.

2.2   Methodology

2.2.1. Sampling:

In her academic paper with Asifa Majid named "Thematic Roles: Core Knowledge or Linguistic Construct?", Lilia Rissman explores the issue of whether such basic concepts as Agent, Theme, and Experiencer are native mental categories or only the conventions of language usage. They investigate this topic by integrating the discoveries from cognitive psychology with linguistics to improve our knowledge of how language functions and is learned. The authors endeavor to do so via a systematic review of the literature, supplemented by their original empirical work. They critically select relevant studies and theoretical papers in a systematic fashion through sampling and further analyze them through both qualitative and quantitative approaches, pursuing the generation of substantial results that would further deepen our understanding of language cognition.

Furthermore, in another research work by Benilde Grana Lopez" ARGUMENT STRUCTURE, THEMATIC ROLES, AND LINKING" in 2001, collecting data was more indirect. Even though the article for summary does not clarify how specifically research was conducted, it is understandable that Lopez summarized distinguished scholars' insights and already formed theories and analysis practices. It was possibly as easy as gathering a collection of articles, books, and existing research. Lopez would take an active role in

critically interacting with such linguistic models, to investigate contrasting views and understandings regarding what characterizes a verbal argument in semantics.

Finally, in "Thematic Relations and Arguments", Terence Parsons' 1995 article: does seem to have been significantly influenced by a careful reading of the existing literature and theories regarding how various thematic features such as Agent and Theme impinge onto objects and events. Parsons, in an attempt to clarify thematic relations and reactions to the criticisms provided by his peers, including, serially examined discussions of these roles in order to improve the robbery and elaboration of candidate and arguer dissidence in the theoretical approach to thematic relations and argument structures. In this way, Parsons ultimately aimed to develop a more sophisticated grasp of these categories.

2.2.2 Research question

The study is created to explore the complexities of language, where the central goal is to improve our understanding of the language patterns by analyzing the traditional approaches to it and providing new angles. It is intended to explore the patterns of word usage in phrases, and the importance of their use to the general understanding of linguistic operations. More so, the 2019 study will be focused on the investigation of the prevalence and nature of thematic roles, with the vital focus on the dynamic between Agent and Patient roles. But despite this study showing an awareness of these roles as inherent and hence universally recognizable and early in one's development, it also indicates the necessity to dig deeper into how they are constructed in individual languages.

Furthermore, this research probes into more general consequences of these roles for our central knowledge, given how many kinds of event descriptions languages allow that go far beyond the typical roles of patients and agents: Therefore, the universal cognitive influence of biases underlies this study, whereas in the comparison of these ideas between languages, the cross-linguistic method is used to "elucidate recurrent cognitive biases that affect how human perceivers conceive and construe events with goals, recipients, and sources". This investigation offers a rather descriptive approach to the topic of thematic roles; however, it contributes to a greater discussion of the role of thematic roles in language interpretation that one may develop in science.

The 2001 research undermines the stated above implied assumption, which is also a basic characteristic of Chomskyan Generative Grammar – meaning roles such as Agent, and Theme provide at least a sufficient core to describe the role of words in sentences. These meaning roles describe "word hood" or "subjacent areas," reveals the fact that this form is not

predictive. As a result, they propose a more fundamental solution is when one thinks more carefully about the notion of meaning.

In conclusion, "Sentence Meaning" compares two types of meaning, namely: internal, based on cognitive perception, and external, based on the environmental context. This is supported by verbs with different sentence functions. The second work, "Thematic Relations and Arguments by Terence Parsons," is devoted to two main tasks. First of all, Terence Parsons wants to deepen our understanding of thematic relations after his long-term exploration formally carried out in 1990 and, secondly, he wants to oppose critics who offer a revision to recreate the subtlest aspects of synergy between verbs and nouns. The specialist admits such roles as Agent, Instrument, and Theme based on their importance for analyzing connections in sentences. At the same time, Parsons agrees that the definitions and descriptions available currently are insufficient. In other words, experts agree on the fact of the existence of thematic relations and, at the same time, acknowledge that these relations have not yet been formulated with due accuracy.

3. Discussions and comparison

In conclusion, the comprehensive research of thematic roles in linguistics is a multidimensional field in which the meaning is transferred via the manner roles, such as Agent, Theme or Experiencer, may be opposed or combined. Researches conducted by Rissman, Majid, Lopez, and Parsons have provided different methods and research questions. However, each of these works helped to understand better thematic roles and explore the relationship between language, cognition and meaning. Rissman and Majid address a fundamental question of linguistic research: are thematic roles inherent cognitive constructs or products of linguistic interaction? This connection ties into their research use of cognitive psychology as a model and their references to linguistic relativity and the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. Although drawing from two varied sections of cognitive psychology and linguistics, Rissman and Majid navigate the equilibrium between conceptual thought and linguistic experience shaping the thematic roles of verbs well. Their study introduces the need for empirical evidence to confirm theories, arguing for language studies across diverse languages and language processing experiments to confirm the psychological existence of these roles.

On the other hand, Rissman and Majid try to reveal the cognitive biases, which are universal in terms of understanding and representing events in linguistics, through systematizing the reviewed literature and a study performed by the authors themselves.

Another example of questioning conventional theories in linguistics is revealed in Lopez. Lopez questions the "received wisdom" concerning some linguistic issues, especially in the treatment of theme roles according to the Chomskyan Generative Grammar. ore like Rissman and Majid, Lopez 's study also shifts to the focus of sentence structures from external environmental usage to internal cognitive meaning representation.

Lopez's comparative analysis of linguistic theories and methods in various languages illustrates just how many ways there are to interpret thematic roles and the ways they impact sentence structure and comprehension. In her research, Lopez delves into the adequacy of various linguistic models to study how aspects of meaning diverge from one another and affect the expression of thematic roles in a multitude of ways in different languages. One of the works that expand the understanding of the field is the work of Parsons. He continues to develop a semantic theory about thematic relations but allows for clarification and more accurate leveling of thematic roles. Following the retrospective assessment of previous interpretations, Parsons finds the criticisms valid and offers changes in understanding the dependencies between verbs, nouns, and the incorporation of such changes into the definition of thematic relations and argument structures. Consenting the validity of thematic roles, Parsons considers it appropriate to allow more linguistic freedom in awarding and determining thematic roles.

Overall, the purpose of the present research conducted by the author is to develop a deeper insight into the thematic relations in linguistic semantics. Despite this general similarity in objectives, the methodological background of the studies is radically different. In the case of the article by Rissman and Majid, the researchers rely on a combination of literature review and the original empirical study to investigate thematic roles using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Therefore, their study is more focused on the role of reliable empirical data in testing the theories about thematic roles.

Lopez, on the other hand, uses a literature review and extant linguistic theories to compare and contrast several meanings and perspectives on thematic roles expression. Without a precise method of data collection, Lopez's serious interaction with linguistic models suggests a rather extensive examination of thematic roles in disparate languages. Parsons adequate review of literature and predominant theories seeks to reimagine and refine thematic relations while also responding to criticism by proposing modifications within the thematic relations and argument structure theory.

Thematic roles, including Agent, Patient, and Goal, are integral concepts in linguistics and cognitive science. They provide a clear view of the nature and significance of language

production and comprehension capacities. Their existence is often believed to be inherent and transcultural, but the challenge in defining the same affects their capacity to differentiate shades of a phenomenon. They constitute the essential framework of the sentence meaning to communicate actions and the objects of an action. The thematic roles have a far-reaching effect on syntactic sensing and cognitive invention. In generative grammar, for instance, Agent is fundamental in deciphering the meaning of a sentence. However, the mentioned aspects are rather abstract and invisible. Their complexity includes their subtle and universally-present presence in almost all linguistic structures, making it difficult to establish a direct correspondence between events and language. The current exploration primarily emphasizes their pivotal role in language-cognition interaction, sentence generation, comprehension of meaning, and cognitive processes.

In relation to the research questions, all three observations are focused on thematic roles in linguistics, but each of them reflects that aspect from a different point. Closely related to this is the question of identifying the roots of thematic roles and finding the common denominator between them. For this reason, Rissman and Majid primarily focus on the universality of cognitive biases behind language and thematic roles. Lopez, in turn, departs from the customary paradigm of thematic role theory, juxtaposing very different theories of meaning and their impact on contrasting the different dimensions of thematic roles. Parsons also seeks to answer the key question posed in the project: "How is it that thematic role relations come to be described in terms of thematic roles?".

In conclusion, the three foregoing academic articles provide valuable contributions to the study of thematic roles in linguistics. They collectively share a focus on uncovering how language meaning is encoded in thematic roles while presenting distinct perspectives, methodologies and research questions. As such they complement each other, adding new perspectives and new angles to enrich the field and participate in an ongoing discussion about the relationship between language, cognition, and meaning.

4. Conclusions

In conclusion, analyzing the prominent linguistic properties of Agent, Patient, and Goal, in the fields of linguistics and cognitive science, highlights the crucial nature of these elements in understanding the structure and meaning of language. As integral aspects of verbs such as "eat," they serve as basic building blocks of sentences that help to organize the distinct units of the sentence and, in so doing, shed light on the creation of meaning. Thematic roles extend far beyond mere linguistic terminology; they describe the distinct categories of

event participants, which is why they are pivotal to various areas of cognitive endeavor, not merely to the discipline of linguistics.

The debate about thematic roles indicates the necessity of a comprehensive enterprise to impinge and recalibrate the existing theories and categorization systems. Though conceived of as a human's mental predispositions, thematic roles seem to be more complex constructs – a sophisticated mixture of inborn knowledge and the linguistic and conceptual classification one acquires. In the general field of anthropology of language and cognition, thematic roles can be viewed as an inborn cognitive blueprint, that develops early on and is generally, though not absolutely, consistent throughout one's life. However, connecting these roles with the actual words that we say is difficult, and this is one indication of how difficult it is to research this area. Still, with hard work and a good grasp on the starting ideas, the examination of thematic roles does give a better insight into how language is comprehended and produced.

5. Suggestions and recommendations

Based on the foregoing, it will be wise for researchers to utilize an interdisciplinary consideration and combine psychology and linguistics. Such an approach will create a special synergy that could increase their understanding of language development and usage. In addition, comparative studies of languages for various purposes can clarify the extent to which some language functions, vocabulary, and grammar are typical or universal. Researchers should expand the scale of their studies, covering a larger number of language samples, and use different research methods to gain a comprehensive understanding of the synergy of vocabulary and grammar. Their investigation must go beyond these traditional linguistic functions to include less widely studied roles like the recipient or instrument for a more comprehensive picture of their development in children and varied cultural expressions. Investigators must enhance their classification and description of these linguistic functions to ensure they are more accurate. Finally, exploring other linguistic theories and their results may stimulate novel perspectives into the connection between language and meaning. This may enable new interpretations of linguistic meaning.

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