

# Grammatical Relations and Semantic Roles of Arguments in English Verbs of Transfer “Convey”

Ida Bagus Janardana Dwipayana<sup>1</sup>, I Wayan Arka<sup>2</sup>, I Nyoman Sedeng<sup>3</sup>

<sup>[1]</sup>English Department, Faculty of Humanities, Udayana University  
Denpasar, Bali

Email: [idabagusjanardanadwipayana@yahoo.com](mailto:idabagusjanardanadwipayana@yahoo.com)

<sup>[2]</sup>English Department, Faculty of Humanities, Udayana University  
Denpasar, Bali

Email: [wayan.arka@anu.edu.au](mailto:wayan.arka@anu.edu.au)

<sup>[3]</sup>English Department, Faculty of Humanities, Udayana University  
Denpasar, Bali

Email: [nyoman\\_sedeng@unud.ac.id](mailto:nyoman_sedeng@unud.ac.id)

**Abstract:** This study entitled *Grammatical Relations and Semantic Roles of Arguments in English Verbs of Transfer “Convey”*. It focused on grammatical relations and semantic role of argument within a certain argument structure. The particular and only data source of this study is Corpus of Contemporary American English. This study used accidental sampling method. Therefore, every data found are constructed with transfer verb “convey” proposed by Levin. Base theories of the analysis are Grammatical Relation and Semantic Role by Kroeger, while it supported by theory of Proto-Roles by Dowty and Taylor. The data representation chosen are presented both in formal and in-formal method. There are 3 different argument structures found within the 100 samplings. Transitive Structure turn out to be the most dominant structure, while the other which are intransitive and ditransitive are reasonably represented. All the grammatical relations are found, they are Subject, Object, Oblique, and Adjunct. In the other hand, all the semantic roles are found except stimulus, beneficiary, and accompaniment. Terms proto-agent and proto-patient supports the mapping of the semantic content. Some roles such as theme and instrument have different lexical understanding. It divided into three terms; physical, perceptible, abstract entities. Specifically, the agent classified into three different indication they are non-symbolic agent, metaphorical agent, abstract agent.

**Keywords:** argument, grammatical relation, semantic roles, proto-roles.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Language is a knowledge that has complex structure and every part of it have their own significance. Kroeger (2005: 7) stated that sentence is not just a long series of speech sounds; it is composed of words and phrases, which must be arranged in a certain way in order to achieve the speaker’s goals. In the clause/sentence, verb is an obligatory significance in the sentence structure. it helps to define the complete meaning of the utterance.

Levin (1993) on his book define 43 different classes of verb. Some of the verb indicate action that make an object

move from a place to another place. Those verbs concluded as the verb of transfer.

Construction that has transfer verb essentially specified about the change of position of entity. Kreidler (2002) also stated that the change can be in manner of motion such as moving vehicle and it can be motionless such as communicating language. For instance, Levin (1993:132) [a] “Nora sent the Book to Peter”. It is clear that the “book” undergoing some movement.

According to Kroeger (2005: 62) Arguments are those elements which are “selected” by the verb; they are required or permitted by certain predicate, but not by others. Argument can be appeared as individual thing; life or non-

life being; and they have different syntactic behavior and different semantic function on their proposition.

In grammatical relations the argument is noted by Subject, Primary Object, Secondary Object, and Oblique. while adjunct is not considered as argument because its optional entry. Kroeger (2005).

In the example [a], it shown that there are three arguments taken by the predicate, they are “Nora”, “Book”, and “Peter”. They are required by the verb in order to complete its flow of the story.

It is important to determine a certain utterance in terms of grammatical relations and semantic roles. In grammatical relations every argument is strictly permitted to certain syntactic behavior, for instance, subject always preceded before predicate. however; in semantic roles, the lexical meaning of the argument is the only benchmark to determine the role.

Language should not immaturely understand. A sentence might have seemingly fine grammatical sentence. However, at some point those so called grammatically correct sentence might also result in illogical meaning. For instance, [a] Amanda drove the package (to New York), [b] The package drove (to New York). In grammatical relations, these two examples can be acceptable. Since they both meet the requirement which they have subject, predicate, and object or oblique argument. However, [b] can lead to misunderstood if the reader do not interpret the meaning thoughtfully. It could lead to the understanding that the packages drove by itself to New York.

Therefore, exploration of the semantic content is necessary in order to find the deeper understanding of each argument found. The sub-surface substance of the clause is explored in term of semantic roles and supported by proto-roles which is used for clearing the vagueness of the argument.

The data for this study are collected from English-Corpora, an online platform that provides thousand real data from different genres. In other word, it is the collection of the text or text extracts for the purpose of language learning and it represent the variety of English.

This study chose verb “convey” as representation of transfer verb simply because the verb convey results on wide diversity of argument in term of grammatical relations and semantic roles.

### Problems of the Study

According to the mentioned background, there are two main problems of this study:

- a. What is the grammatical relation of the argument within the clause consisting transfer verb “convey”?
- b. How is the semantic role of the grammatically determined argument within the clause consisting transfer “convey”?

### Aims of the Study

Based from the problems mentioned, hypothetically there are two aims of this study:

- a. to find out the grammatical relation of the argument within the clause consisting transfer verb “convey”.
- b. to understand the semantic roles and lexical varieties of each argument within the clause consisting transfer verb “convey”.

## II. RESEARCH METHOD

Essentially, this Humaniores study used descriptive qualitative method which interpret linguistic phenomenon by written interpretation in the form of paragraph. Therefore, there are four elements of the research method.

### Data Source

This study use COCA (Corpus of Contemporary American English as reference academic sources. This platform provides thousands of data from several genres. Those genres are BLOG, WEB, TV/M, SPOK (spoken), FIC (fiction), MAG (magazine), NEW, and ACAD (academic). The data are in the form of text or paragraph. Therefore, the texts are filtered in smaller constituent in the form of clause or sentence.

Rajeg (2018) in his journal similarly also used online linguistic corpus. He mentioned about the understanding of raw corpus; it refers to text that has no linguistics annotation. Therefore, the data found in COCA are not annotated by grammatical relations or semantic roles.

### Method and Technique of Collecting Data

The method for collecting the data is sampling. Specifically, the researcher applies the accidental sampling method. According to Sugiyono (2009:85) the technique describes how the data is collected by accidental discovery without any probability. The number of accidental sampling chosen is 100 data.

Website tools is used for discovering the required data. the keyword for the searching within the box searcher in the website is word “convey”. It is important to note that the result of finding are not annotated data. Therefore, the researcher needs to find the deeper understanding and coherent between the constituent before and after the verb in the sentence manually.

### Method and Technique of Analyzing Data

Distributional method that mentioned by Zaim (2014) is used in this study especially for analysing the data. the term refers to segmenting constituents within the clause into certain classification. For instance, [a] [This book conveys] the core idea. The constituents “this” and “book” are described as determiner and noun which segmented into 1 constituent. At the same time, the segmented constituent is defined as 1 argument.

### Method and Technique of Presenting Data

This study used both in-formal and formal method

mentioned by Sudaryanto (2015) The in-formal method refers to non-symbolic representation which depicted by descriptive interpretation. While The formal method refers to symbolic representation which depicted in tree diagram.

It is important to bear in mind that not every data in analysis are portrayed by tree diagram. From each construction category, 1 data are chosen as the representation for another perspective which symbolically shows the complexity of the corresponding clause.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The result is divided into two different section. there are surface level which refers to grammatical relations and subsurface level which refers to semantic roles.

#### 3.1 Grammatical Relations in Surface Structure of Syntactic Transitivity

There are three main argument structure found within the 100 data, there are intransitive, transitive and di-transitive. The corresponding structures are mentioned by Kroeger (2005), similarly Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, 1972 also mentioned exactly similar construction; however, Quirk describe one object construction with mono-transitive.

Deliberately, the argument that occurred before the predicate is always defined as subject. The subject is determined by its position in word order, essentially portrayed by phrase which has the head as a “noun”. also, subject can be substituted with content question. since the determination of subject is fairly straightforward. The discussion is most likely focused on the number of the existence of the object.

##### 3.1.1 In-transitive Construction

Intransitive refers to the absence of object in the structure. The basic syntactic category for intransitive structure is S=NP-VP. the other constituent after the predicate may depicted as oblique or adjunct. it is important to bear in mind that oblique is not considered as object even though it essentially constructed by NP because oblique is *not directly* affected by the action resulted by the predicate.

The key distinguisher for the vagueness between object and oblique is that oblique is preceded by prepositional element (P).

The data:

- a. [The last warning] SUBJ [was conveyed] PRED [a week ago] ADJUNCT OF TIME
- b. [it] SUBJ [was] AUX [once willingly] ADJUNCT OF MANNER [conveyed] PRED [to] P [some organization] OBL
- c. [A cat's feelings] SUBJ [were conveyed] PRED [to] P [our heroes] OBL [by] P [the frog] OBL

all of the construction [a], [b.], [c] are considered as intransitive because the construction achieved the thoughtfulness of the use of the verb without assigning any object (OBJ). Yet, [b] and [c] contain Oblique within their construction.

Kroeger (2005) stated that oblique is considered as

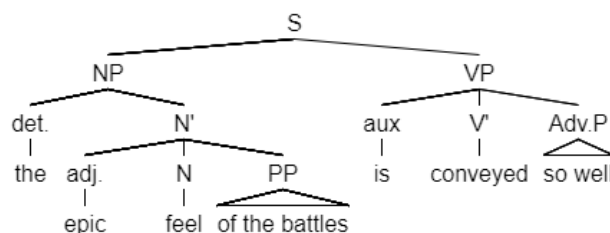
argument because it required to deliver the thoughtfulness of the story. In summary, [a] only has 1 argument which is “the last warning”; while [b] has 2 arguments, they are “it” and “some organization”. lastly, [c] has 3 argument; they are “a cat’s feeling”, “our heroes” and “the frog”.

In data [a], the last constituent “a week ago” is not considered as argument because it refers to idea of time. While in [b] the constituent “once willingly” also describes the manner of how the action is done.

Kroeger (2005) stated adjunct are those elements which implicates optional notion of time and manner, it may also implicate adjunct of place that portray a repetition of place notion within one clause.

- d. [the epic feel of the battles] SUBJ [is conveyed] PRED [so well] ADJUNCT OF MANNER

Another representation of intransitive construction is represented in data [d]



The insightful portrayal shows that an argument might appeared complexly. specifically, the noun phrase preceded before the verb is syntactically acted as Subject. The subject is constructed with the NP that complemented by PP.

The constituent after the predicate also clearly shows it optional element. the adverbial phrase “so well” only modifies the verb, and it is not considered as participant.

##### 3.1.2 Transitive Construction

This section focused on construction of predicate “convey” which takes 1 object within its structure. the basic syntactic category for the corresponding structure is S=NP-VP-NP. the other constituent after the object can be either described as adjunct or oblique.

For comparison; in traditional grammar mentioned by Kim and Sells (2008), the term indirect object is used for marking those argument which preceded preposition. However, this study prefers to use the term oblique proposed by Kroeger (2005) simply to avoid auto-confusion in the analysis.

Oblique should not be considered as object, because most of the time their lexical entries refers to place, causee, tools which are not directly affected by the predicate. they are just the participant which existence is important for the thoughtfulness of the story.

The data:

- a. [She] SUBJ [conveys] PRED [longing and loss that many of us feel] OBJI
- b. [the moving walkway] SUBJ [conveyed] PRED [us] OBJI [to] P [the baggage reclaim area] OBL [at Gatwick] ADJUNCT OF TIME

- c. [It] SUBJ [conveys] PRED [to] P [me] OBL [the possibility that big ideas can become big things] OBJI

Data [a] is the simplest representation of the transitive construction compared to other data. It does not include any element that might lead to confusion in grammatical relations level. The only complexity is the object's constituent. The object is constructed with coordinate constituents. It refers to certain construction that has two exactly similar constituents that belong to the same level. Thus, "longing" and "loss" is the coordinate constituent.

Data [b] shows more complex structure which needs to be explored carefully. Clearly, the first argument after the predicate "us" is considered as object because there is no preposition preceding the noun phrase. However, there are two more noun phrases that are preceded by preposition. Therefore, only the noun phrase "the baggage reclaim area" is considered as argument because the other noun phrase "at Gatwick" implicates a repetition of place. Hence, the noun phrase can be defined as prepositional modifier.

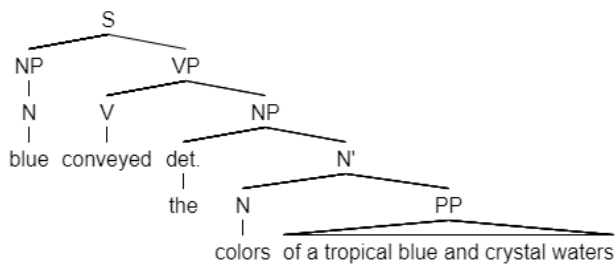
The prepositional modifier refers to a prepositional phrase that modifies a certain noun phrase within the structure. In this case "at Gatwick" modifies "the baggage reclaim area". Accordingly, "at Gatwick" is considered as adjunct of place.

Data [c] is considered as a unique construction. Grammatically, oblique should not appear before the object sequentially. It can be seen, the first argument after the predicate "me" is preceded by preposition "to". Therefore, the argument "me" is immediately followed by another argument "the possibility that big ideas can become big things" that has no preposition prior to its occurrence. Data [c] can be considered as ungrammatical, however, the meaning is still completely acceptable.

According to COCA expanded content, data [c] is based on the blog which the content mostly talks about medical issues. There is no dialect that is based on any cultural factor in the blog's discussion. Therefore, this kind of unique data is best described as a common English error.

- d. [blue] SUBJ [conveys] PRED [the colors of a tropical sky and crystal waters] OBJI

Another insight of transitive construction in a tree diagram is based on the data [d]



Accordingly, there is a noun phrase that is preceded by preposition "of". However, it is not considered as oblique. The function of the prepositional phrase "the colors of a tropical sky and crystal waters" is for complementing the noun phrase "the colors". In summary, it is important to

explore the prepositional phrase by its lexical entry to determine whether it stands individually or dependently.

### 3.1.2 Di-transitive Construction

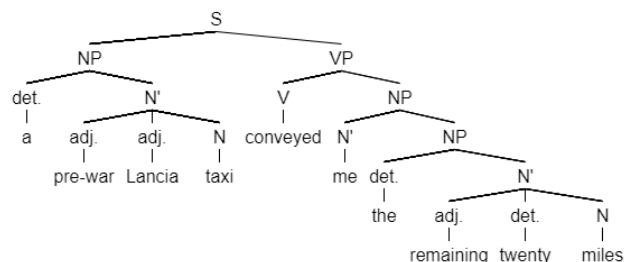
This section essentially discusses about argument structure which has two objects in sequence appeared after the predicate. The basic syntactic category for this construction is S=NP-VP-NP-NP. However, in 100 sampling there is only one di-transitive construction found.

The data:

- a. [A pre-war Lancia taxi] SUBJ [conveyed] PRED [me] OBJI [the remaining twenty miles] OBJ2

It is shown that there are 3 arguments within the construction. They are "A pre-war Lancia taxi", "me", and "the remaining twenty miles". Every argument after the predicate does not precede by any preposition, therefore the objects are noted as Primary and Secondary object. The term assigned the argument by their word order. The closest argument to the predicate is determined as primary object, while the other as secondary object.

The tree diagram for the Di-transitive is represented in the following picture:



The arguments are mostly modified by adjective; therefore, they are not constructed by certain construction such as relative clause or coordinate construction.

### 3.2 Semantic Roles and Sub-Surface Comprehension of The Argument

This section focuses on the semantic level of the clause. Essentially, semantic roles do not permit to certain behavior or rules. The benchmark for determining the semantic roles are the lexical meaning of the argument. The lexical meaning of the preposition also plays a big role to determine which kind of semantic roles should one take.

Kroeger's inventory of semantic roles consists of Agent, Patient, Recipient, Theme, Stimulus, Experiencer, Instrument, Beneficiary, Accompaniment, Source, Path, and Goal.

Some arguments can be appeared vaguely in the sentence. The vagueness refers to an argument which has more than one prototype of certain semantic roles.

The discussion of semantic roles is portrayed with two main sub-sections. They are agentive active and agentive passive. Therefore, agent refers to entity which has the volitional ability that causes an event. Arka (1996) also mentioned a constituent which consciously acted to initiate an event is described as causative. Both agent and causative terms have exactly the same main property.

### 3.2.1 Agentive Active

The term refers to construction that has an agent positioned before the predicate. It implicates that the agent actively performs the action that causes the change of state of the other entity.

The data:

- a. [it] PA: AGENT CONVEYS [deep emotions] PP: THEME to [a girl] EXPERIENCER
- b. [the moving walkway] PA: AGENT CONVEYED [us] PP: THEME to [the baggage reclaim area] GOALS at [Gatwick] ADJUNCT

Data [a] shows that the argument “it” has the proto-roles of an agent which is causing a movement to the argument “deep emotions”. Thus, “it” described as **proto-agent**. It is also considered as proto-agent because *dummy it* can be referred to any entities, the only way to determine it further is by seeking the expanded content of the data; yet, based from the construction only, “it” is best described as abstract proto-agent. Second argument “deep emotions” clearly undergoes the change of state in term of position; therefore, it inherits the proto-roles of patient. Hence, it is described as **proto-patient** which decided as theme to specifies its semantic content.

The theme is considered as perceptive entity. “deep feelings” obviously described as unanimated entity that is understood only by human’s cognitive system. Therefore, the last argument “a girl” is best considered as experiencer because the way she accepts the theme is by feeling it. Notably, indeed the girl also bears the property of recipient.

Data [b] portrays a metaphorical agent mentioned by Taylor, 1995. The argument “the moving walkway” is considered as unanimated entity, yet it metaphorically described as participant which consciously acting, responsible agent. Therefore, it inherits the proto-roles of an agent which causes an event.

The second argument “us” clearly inherits the proto-roles of patient which undergoes change of state, which lexically it refers to change of place, thus it is best described as theme to specifies its semantic content. In addition, the theme is considered as physical theme since “us” implicates a bunch of people.

The last argument “the baggage reclaim area” is considered as goal since it implicates the end point of the movement of the theme. The last constituent “at Gatwick” does not have any semantic roles because it is considered as adjunct of place. It only repeats a place notion.

### 3.2.1 Agentive Passive

The term agentive passive refers to construction which the agent appeared after the predicate. In other words, the topic of the clause is assigned by other semantic roles.

The data:

- a. [the general impression] PP: THEME conveyed by [a representation] AGENT
- b. [A cat's feelings] PP: THEME were conveyed to [our heroes] EXPERIENCER by [the frog] AGENT

It can be seen that the last argument in both clauses described as agent. They are considered as **prototypical agent not proto-agent**. They possess all the properties of an agent. Thus, they are considered as the truest actor of the clause due to their portrayal as animated entity. In summary, they are depicted as non-symbolic agent.

## IV. CONCLUSION

The total occurrence of the clause that predicated by transfer verb “convey” is 16226 times according to the COCA data library. Therefore, the data is sampled by 100 sampling.

There are three main terms found based on the number of the object appeared within the sentence. They are classified as intransitive, transitive, and di-transitive. The most dominant occurrence belongs to transitive that appeared about 63 times, followed by intransitive with 36 occurrences, while Di-transitive only occurred once.

Clearly in-transitive is described as no-object construction. In summary, they possess zero to two occurrences of oblique argument. In term of transitive, the construction only has zero to one occurrence of oblique. For the di-transitive construction, it turns out that the corresponding construction shows no oblique equivalent.

Every adjunct are appeared within the 100 samplings, they are adjunct of time, adjunct of manner, and adjunct of place. These elements indeed concluded as grammatical relations, however they are not described as argument because its optional entry.

The most dominant semantic roles found in the sentence is theme. It is very reasonable since the predicate roles decided the semantic role which argument possessed. The verb transfer ultimately result in the movement of certain entity.

Theme is divided into two deeper compressive understanding. They are two major kind of the theme; physical and perceptual theme. Therefore, the perceptual theme has higher frequency of occurrence. In summary, verb transfer convey is most likely used for transferring perceptual thing in real life situation, such as feeling, thoughts, knowledge and another perceptive thing.

There are two kind of broader understanding of an agent. They are non-symbolic agent and metaphorical agent. However, since this study focused only on the expressive constituent within the clause, therefore the expressed agent is the only agent that being classified. The most dominant agent comprehension is metaphorical agent.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Arka, I Wayan. (1996). *Argument Structure and Linear Order in Balinese Binding*. University of Sydney.
- [2] Dowty, David. (1991). *Thematic Proto-Roles and Argument Selection*. Linguistic Society of America.

- [3] Kim, Jong Bok, Sells, P. (2008). *English Syntax: An Introduction*. Kyung Hee University.
- [4] Kreidler, Charles W. (2002). *Introducing English Semantic*. This edition published in the Taylor & Francis e-Library.
- [5] Kroeger, Paul R. (2005). *Analyzing Grammar an Introduction*. Cambridge University Press, Singapore.
- [6] Levin, Beth. (1993). *English Verb Classes and Alternations*. The University of Chicago Press Chicago and London.
- [7] Quirk R., Greenbaum S., Leech G., (1972). *A Grammar of Contemporary English*. Longman Singapore Publishers Pte Ltd. Singapore.
- [8] Rajeg, Gede Primahadi Wijaya. (2018). *Working with A Linguistic Corpus Using R: An Introductory Note with Indonesian Negating Construction*. Monash University.
- [9] Sudaryanto. (2015). *Metode dan Aneka Teknik Analisis Bahasa*. Yogyakarta: Duta Wacana University.
- [10] Sugiyono. (2009). *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif dan R&D*. Bandung: Alfabeta.
- [11] Taylor, John. R. (1995). *LINGUISTIC CATEGORIZATION Prototypes in Linguistic Theory*. Oxford University Press.
- [12] Zaim, M. (2014). *Metode Penelitian Bahasa: Pendekatan Struktural*. FBS UNP Press, Padang.