

Today's topics:

- **Thematic (θ) roles**
- **Case (sentence structure)**
- **Intro to verbs of giving/receiving**

Background preparation:

- *Previous discussion of politeness factors*

0. Today's objectives

After today's class, you should be able to:

- Discuss interactions among horizontal distance, vertical position, and in-group/out-group
- Express the participant structure of events/states
 - Meaning: Introduction to thematic roles
 - Structure: Case and sentence position
- Be ready to give a linguistic analysis of verbs of giving and receiving
 - How do they relate to all of the above?

1. Warm-up and review

- Dimensions of politeness ([handout](#))
 - What are some social factors that are involved in the **horizontal** dimension?
 - What are some social factors that are involved in the **vertical** dimension?
 - How do the concepts of **in-group/out-group** and **SSS** interact with these dimensions?

1. Review: Some key social-context factors

- Dimensions of politeness ([handout](#))
 - **Horizontal** dimension
 - Horizontal distance to addressee
(Formality of *relationship* or *situation*)
 - **In-group vs. out-group** relationships in **referents** of utterance
 - **Vertical** dimension
 - Social **hierarchy** — is anyone **SSS**?
 - SSS **addressee**? (who you are talking *to*)
 - SSS **referent**? (who you are talking *about*)

1. Review: Some key social-context factors

- Dimensions of politeness ([handout](#))
 - **In-group/out-group**
 - Who is in-group? Depends on **context**
 - In-group can **never** be **SSS**
- Check-in on **prep questions**

2. Participants in events/states

- We can consider how an **event or state** is **expressed linguistically** from two perspectives:
 - What is the **role** that each **participant** plays in the situation? → What **meaning** is conveyed?
 - **Thematic roles**
 - What is the **position** that each participant has in the **linguistic expression** of the situation? → What **structure** is used?
 - **Case and sentence structure**

3. Thematic roles

- **Thematic roles** (also called θ -roles, theta-roles)
 - A general theory of the **roles** that entities play with respect to a given event or state
 - Intended to be universal/cross-linguistic
 - Provides a way to talk about how similar meanings can be given different linguistic encodings within or across languages
- Info: Santorini & Kroch (2007) [online syntax textbook](#), supplementary section on [thematic roles](#)

3. Thematic roles

- We will focus on these roles for today's discussion
(Definitions adapted from Santorini & Kroch 2007)
 - **Agent** — brings about a state of affairs; sentient
 - **Recipient** — comes to have something
 - **Theme** — undergoer, thing affected
- Which participant has which role in this **transfer** situation?



the student



a strawberry



the cat

3. Thematic roles

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 - **Theme** — undergoer, thing affected
- Which participant has which role in this **transfer** situation?



3. Thematic roles

- The same event/state can often be linguistically expressed in several ways

- What are some ways of expressing this transfer situation in English?



the student

agent



a strawberry

theme



the cat

recipient

3. Thematic roles

- What are some ways of expressing this transfer situation in English?



agent



theme



recipient

The student gave the cat a strawberry.

The student gave a strawberry to the cat.

The cat received a strawberry from the student.

The cat got a strawberry from the student.

The cat was given a strawberry by the student.

3. Thematic roles

- How do these sentences differ?
 - Are any of them passive sentences?
 - What other differences can we observe?

The student gave the cat a strawberry.

The student gave a strawberry to the cat.

The cat received a strawberry from the student.

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3. Thematic roles

- How do these sentences differ?
 - Are any of them passive sentences?
 - What other differences can we observe?

	active/ passive	transfer type	other
<i>The student gave the cat a strawberry.</i>	active	GIVE	NP-NP
<i>The student gave a strawberry to the cat.</i>	active	GIVE	NP-PP
<i>The cat received a strawberry from the student.</i>	active	RECV	formal
<i>The cat got a strawberry from the student.</i>	active	RECV	casual
<i>The cat was given a strawberry by the student.</i>	passive	GIVE	

- A note: **Passives** have specific morphology and syntax:
in English, this is *be* (or *get*) + passive participle
 - Be careful not to overuse the term 'passive'

4. Case and sentence structure, part 1

- There are different **structural positions** in a sentence that event/state participants can take with respect to the sentence's **predicate** (verb, etc.)
 - In some languages, these different positions involve different **morphology** → **case**
- We will focus on these positions for today's discussion:
 - Subject
 - Direct object
 - (Indirect object — see a little further below)

4. Case and sentence structure, part 1

- Consider these sentences in English:
 - (a) *Three hats fell off the shelf.*
 - (b) *The composer wrote a new sonata for the orchestra.*
- What is the subject of each sentence?
- Does either sentence have a direct object?
- How can we **identify** subject and direct object in English?

4. Case and sentence structure, part 1

- How to **identify** subject / direct object in English?

Subject

- Position: Occurs before the verb
(except in certain questions)
- Morphology: The verb agrees with the subject in person and number

Direct object

- Position: Occurs after the verb
- Morphology/syntax: Noun phrase; does not need to occur with a preposition

4. Case and sentence structure, part 1

- Are subject / direct object ever distinguished by morphological **case** in English?

- **Case** (quick definition for our purposes):
morphological marking that indicates or is required by differences in status as subject / direct object / indirect object

4. Case and sentence structure, part 1

- Are subject / direct object ever distinguished by morphological **case** in English?

- Only in the pronoun system!

I see **them**.

They see **me**.

- Otherwise, English relies heavily on **sentence position** (word order) to **represent case information**

5. The structure of GIVE/RECEIVE expressions

- What is the difference between GIVE and RECEIVE, in terms of **thematic roles** vs. **sentence positions**?



agent



theme



recipient

*The student **gave** a strawberry to the cat.*

*The cat **received** a strawberry from the student.*

	agent	theme	recipient
GIVE			
RECEIVE			

5. The structure of GIVE/RECEIVE expressions

- What is the difference between GIVE and RECEIVE, in terms of **thematic roles** vs. **sentence positions**?



agent



theme



recipient

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*The cat **received** a strawberry from the student.*

	agent	theme	recipient
GIVE	subject	direct object	indirect object
RECEIVE	other	direct object	subject

5. The structure of GIVE/RECEIVE expressions

- Summary for English

	Agent (or Cause)	Theme	Recipient
GIVE	subject	direct object	indirect object (PP _{to} or NP)
RECEIVE	PP _{from}	direct object	subject

- Can a similar classification system be extended to Japanese?
 - First: What identifies subject, direct object, indirect object in Japanese?

6. Case and sentence structure in Japanese

Work groups

- How could we translate these sentences into Japanese? [Use *-ga*, not *-wa*, for this.]

Aya saw Ken.

Ken saw Aya.

- Assuming the Japanese sentence has the same structure as the English sentence [ok in this case!], what are the **subject** and the **direct object**?
- Does Japanese have **morphological case**?

6. Case and sentence structure in Japanese

- How could we translate these sentences?

Aya saw Ken.

*Aya-**ga** Ken-**o** mi-ta*

Aya-? Ken-? see-PAST

Ken saw Aya.

*Ken-**ga** Aya-**o** mi-ta*

Ken-? Aya-? see-PAST

- Note: Because *-wa* is a **topic** marker, it does not indicate **case** (more on *-wa* later in the course)

6. Case and sentence structure in Japanese

- How can we identify subject / direct object?

Aya saw Ken.

Aya-ga Ken-o mi-ta

Aya-NOM Ken-ACC see-PAST

Subject

- Morphology: -ga case suffix = NOMINATIVE

Direct object

- Morphology: -o case suffix = ACCUSATIVE

(Position is less useful — more on this later)

7. For next time

- **Data set** and **prep questions** involving verbs of giving and receiving in Japanese
- Recent concepts to think about:
 - **Thematic role** (agent or recipient?)
 - **Case** (subject, direct object, other?)
 - **In-group** vs **out-group**?
 - Is **SSS** involved?