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DISCRETE ENTAILMENT-BASED LINKING AND *-EE* NOUNS IN ENGLISH

Abstract:

Barker (1998) argues that since the referent of an *-ee* noun can be an indirect object, a direct object, a prepositional object, or a subject, *-ee* nouns cannot be described as a syntactic natural class. Portero Muñoz (2003) concurs and offers a semantic analysis based on Logical Structure (LS) in the framework of Role and Reference Grammar (RRG). This article proposes that RRG's macroroles (Actor and Undergoer) can be derived with two entailments and without any need for LS. Its analysis improves Portero Muñoz's, presenting additional evidence that subjects that allow *-ee* noun formation are Undergoers. It also explains why most *-ee* nouns are direct objects in spite of the fact that the suffix originated as a referent for indirect objects. Finally, it offers an explanation for nouns like *amputee*, *pluckee*, *twistee*, *benefactee*, *malefactee*, *biographee*, *catapultee*, *razee*, *standee*, *attendee*.

Keywords: argument structure, benefactee, dative overriding, linking theory, malefactee, macroroles, Proto-Roles, theta-roles, unaccusativity.

1. Entailment-Based Linking Theory¹

Linking theory is the matching of grammatical relations and thematic roles. After Gruber's seminal work (1976), at least five fairly complete linking theories have been proposed: 1) Role and Reference Grammar's macroroles (Foley, Van Valin, 1984; Van Valin, LaPolla, 1997); 2) Dowty's Proto-Roles (1991); 3) Wechsler's three linking rules (1995); 4) Levin and

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¹ I use entailment in its truth conditional sense, as defined, for example, in Huddleston & Pullum (35): 2002

X entails Y ≡ If X is true, then it follows necessarily that Y is true too.

Rappaport Hovav's linking rules (1995; 1999); and 5) Davis's proto-role attributes (2001).

Perhaps the most predictive and commonly invoked linking proposals are Dowty's Proto-Roles and Role and Reference Grammar's (RRG) macroroles. I will show that Dowty's Proto-Roles can be arrived at using two entailments. Readers familiar with macroroles and Proto-Roles will realize that if the two entailments constitute a simpler way of determining Proto-Agenthood and Proto-Patienthood, the same holds for the Actor and Undergoer macroroles, which can also be selected without LS, at least for the present analysis of *-ee* nouns.

According to Dowty, most linking is predictable. It follows from his Argument Selection Principle, stated below, along with contributing properties for each Proto-Role.

(1) Argument Selection Principle (1991: 576)

In predicates with grammatical subject and object, the argument for which the predicate entails the greatest number of Proto-Agent properties will be lexicalized as the subject of the predicate; the argument having the greatest number of Proto-Patient entailments will be lexicalized as the direct object.

(2) Contributing properties for the Agent Proto-Role (1991: 572):

- a. volitional involvement in the event or state
- b. sentience (and/or perception)
- c. causing an event or change of state in another participant
- d. movement (relative to the position of another participant)
- e. exists independently of the event named by the verb

(3) Contributing properties for the Patient Proto-Role (1991: 572):

- a. undergoes change of state
- b. incremental theme
- c. causally affected by another participant
- d. stationary (relative to movement of another participant)
- e. does not exist independently of the event, or not at all

Observe that in a predicate like

(4) Kim proposes provoking theories all the time.

the subject of the predicate (Kim) satisfies more Proto-Agent entailments than the object and vice versa. For that reason, (4) is a likely predicate in English, but no native speaker of English utters predicates like (5):

(5) *Provoking theories propose Kim all the time.

Dowty's principle refers only to transitive predicates, although he hints at the possibility that it can also be applied to intransitive predicates (1991: 606 ff). As is now well known, thanks to the Unaccusative Hypothesis (UH), there are two classes of intransitive predicates. In the first, the subject is an external argument. Verbs belonging to this class are used in unergative predicates. In the second, the subject is an underlying direct object (an internal direct argument), and verbs belonging to this class are used in unaccusative or unaccusativized predicates. In plain English, the subject of an unergative predicate behaves like the subject of a transitive predicate, but the subject of an unaccusative behaves in many respects like a direct object. The predicate in (6a) is unergative, and the one in (6b) unaccusative or unaccusativized:

- (6) a. Kim walks.
 b. The flowers wilted.

The predicate in (6a) passes unergative tests, and (6b) passes unaccusative tests (see Legendre, 1989 and Perlmutter, 1978, among others). Furthermore, (6a) clearly satisfies most of the Proto-Agent entailments and none of the Proto-Patient ones, but the opposite is true for (6b). In fact, Dowty's Argument Selection Principle can be augmented to include intransitive predicates as follows:

- (7) If the single argument of an intransitive predicate entails more Proto-Agent properties, the predicate will be unergative; if it entails more Proto-Patient properties, it will be unaccusative.

This addendum could easily be incorporated into Dowty's principle, but we will not take that route. Instead, we propose an improvement that incorporates this addendum into our argument selection principle.

2. Two Entailment-Based Tests for the UH

All the tests for unaccusativity proposed so far can be subsumed by Bresnan's Participle-Adjective Conversion Rule (1982: 23–31) and by a paraphrase that slightly modifies the intuition of *-er* nominalization; that is, the observation that *-er* nominalization correlates with external argumenthood.

Bresnan's Participle-Adjective Conversion Rule provides evidence that an argument is a Patient or theme (an initial 2 in Relational Grammar [RG] or an internal direct argument in Government and Binding), if its

participle can be turned into an adjective. Her original test (8d) can be turned into an entailment by stating it as a proposition, as in (8e).

Let us apply this test to the predicates in (6):

- (8) a. Kim walks.
 b. #The walked Kim.²
 c. The flowers wilted.
 d. The wilted flowers
 e. These are the wilted flowers.

The string in (8b) is an unlikely phrase in English, but (8d) is well attested. This test suggests that *wilt* is an unaccusative or unaccusativized verb; that is, its subject is an underlying direct object and, therefore, should easily satisfy more Proto-Patient entailments. On the other hand, *walk* is an unergative verb; that is, its subject should easily satisfy more Proto-Agent entailments. Both predictions are correct, as the reader can verify by referring to (3) for the predicate *wilt* and (2) for the predicate *walk*.

Farrell (1994; 2000), Keyser and Roeper (1984), Levin and Rappaport (1988), Rappaport and Levin (1988), and Ryder (1999), among others, have shown that *-er* nominalization is possible with an external argument (or an initial 1 in RG), and although it has been shown that *-er* nominalization is not restricted to subjects (Farrell 2000; Ryder 1999), subjects of unergative and transitive verbs readily accept *-er* nominalizations, while unaccusative or unaccusativized verbs do not. I have adapted *-er* nominalization as a test for Proto-Agenthood by using the paraphrase *x is the Verber*, where *x* is the participant whose Proto-Agenthood or Proto-Patienthood is at issue. Let us apply this test to (6):

- (9) a. Kim walks.
 b. Kim is the walker.
 c. The flowers wilted.
 d. #The flowers are the wilter.

Notice that *Kim is the walker* is clearly semantically sound, while # *The flowers are the wilter* is not. The “wilter” will be the sun, the heat, the lack of nutrients, the lack of water, etc. In fact, (9b) is entailed by (9a), but (9d) is not entailed by (9c). By the same token, (8d) is entailed by (8c), but (8b) is not entailed by (8a).

² The notation # means that the sentence is not semantically sound or not entailed by the sentence under discussion.

Let us call the paraphrases in (8d, e) the Verbed entailment and the paraphrases in (9b,d) the Verber entailment, and let us apply them to the transitive predicate in (10a). I refer to these tests as entailments because every time (8c) is true, (8e) is also true; every time (9a) is true, (9b) is also true and likewise for (10a) and (10b) and (10a) and (10e).

- (10) a. Margarita returned the blouse.
 b. Margarita is the returner. (The Verber entailment)
 c. #This is the returned Margarita. (The Verbed entailment)
 d. #The blouse is the returner. (The Verber entailment)
 e. This is the returned blouse. (The Verbed entailment)

The fact that (10b) is entailed by (10a) tells us that Margarita is an initial 1, or an external argument. In terms of Proto-Roles, Margarita is the Agent; in terms of macroroles, the Actor. We will refer to strings like those in (10b) as the *unergative entailment*, meaning that this string shows that the argument at issue (the subject, in this case) passes the unergative test. For brevity, we will refer to an argument that satisfies the unergative entailment as the *Verber* and to the unergative entailment as the *Verber test*, since it selects the Verber in a predicate.

The fact that the string in (10e) is also entailed by (10a) tells us that *the blouse* is an initial 2, or an internal argument. In terms of Proto-Roles, *the blouse* is the Patient; in terms of macroroles, the Undergoer. We will refer to strings like those in (10e) as the *accusative entailment*, meaning that the argument at issue passes the accusative test. For brevity, we will refer to an argument that satisfies the accusative entailment as the *Verbed* and to the accusative entailment as the *Verbed test*. Observe that *the returned Margarita* could be a semantically sound string but only as an entailment from a predicate like *Margarita returned to town*. It is not entailed by *Margarita returned the blouse*, because in this predicate, she is the returner, not the returned. After testing our Verber and Verbed entailments with transitive and intransitive predicates, we can now formulate the Verber/Verbed Argument Selection Principle:

- (11) The Verber is always lexicalized as the subject. The Verbed is lexicalized as the direct object of a transitive sentence but as the subject of an unaccusative or unaccusativized one.

It follows from (11) that, first, the Verber is always the subject, but the subject is not always the Verber, and, second, the direct object is always a Verbed, but a Verbed can be a subject.

Thus, the Verber and Verbed entailments can do much more simply what the Proto-Agent and Proto-Patient entailments set out to do. Instead of computing a set of entailments – the relative number of Proto-Agent or Proto-Patient properties (2 and 3 above) that a given argument satisfies – the listener or reader merely decides between two discrete entailments, as the predicates in (8), (9), and (10) show.

In RRG (Van Valin, LaPolla 1997: 145) the Undergoer is “the participant that the speaker is presenting as being most affected by the action.” The Undergoer macrorole seems to have trouble with examples like (12) and (13), and others omitted for brevity (*inherit, lose, suffer*, etc.):

- (12) a. Uncle George underwent surgery.
 b. Uncle George is the Undergoer. (Verber test)
 c. #This is the undergone Uncle George. (Verbed test)
 d. #Surgery is the Undergoer. (Verber test)
 e. This is the undergone surgery. (Verbed test)
- (13) a. Uncle George received a huge amount of money.
 b. Uncle George is the receiver (Verber test)
 c. #This is the received Uncle George. (Verbed test)
 d. #A huge amount of money is the receiver. (Verber test)
 e. This is the received huge amount of money. (Verbed test)

In both sentences, *Uncle George* seems to be more affected than *surgery* and *a huge amount of money*. Thus, RRG’s undergoer role seems unable to explain these examples. On the other hand, the Verber and Verbed entailments show the subject aligned with the Verber, as the Verber/Verbed Argument Selection Principle predicts.

What is the level of representation for Verber and Verbed?³ Are they thematic roles or macroroles (or Proto-Roles)? As the preceding discussion suggests, invoking a multi-level of representation might not be necessary. Verber and Verbed are “extracted” from “surface structures” with two entailments that do not require any theoretical assumptions. As used in this article, entailment is an independently motivated notion and already part of philosophy and natural language.

The analysis proposed here suggests that thematic roles might be less complex than once thought. Notice, for example, that referring to transitive or intransitive *break, melt, dry, freeze*, as in Levin and Rappaport (1999: 250), Van Valin and LaPolla (1997: 93), and Davis (2001: 181), among

³ Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for raising this and other questions that have improved my argument.

others, may be misguided. Those verbs can be used either transitively or intransitively. However, the sentence in which they appear is either transitive or intransitive, but never both at the same time. Thus, sentences, not verbs, are transitive or intransitive. The transitivity or intransitivity can be simply “read off”, since each sentence can have a Verber and a Verbed or one or the other, depending on the verb. Unaccusative or unaccusativized sentences are verberless (but not subjectless), whereas ergative sentences are verbedless. Thus, defining any thematic roles or macroroles seems unnecessary. They are arrived at by applying the two entailments to a given sentence. Speakers seem to intuit the notion of transitivity or intransitivity, for even those who cannot read and have never heard the terms *transitive* or *intransitive* produce sentences like (4) but not like (5), and correctly use verbs transitively or intransitively.⁴

3. Grammatical Relations and Thematic Roles

The evidence so far shows that the Verber/Verbed Argument Selection Principle is a more restrictive theory of linking than Dowty’s Proto-Roles and RRG’s macroroles because computing two discrete entailments is simpler than computing two sets of entailments, as in Dowty, and readers familiar with the LS needed in RRG (see Van Valin and LaPolla, and Portero Muñoz) can easily see that this proposal is simpler than that as well. As shown in González (2005a, 2005b), the Verber/Verbed Argument Selection Principle accounts for many of the exceptions listed by Dowty, and in that sense, it is also more predictive. It solves some problems not even noticed in RRG until now, as we have just seen in a brief comparison.

A third role now seems necessary to account for indirect objects marked with *to* or *for* and for so-called double-object constructions. Modeled after nouns like *addressee*, *sendee*, *recommendee*, *payee*, *licensee*, and *grantee*, our third and final role is the role of Verbee. If we have to determine the linking in a sentence like:

- (14) a. Grandpa sent a package to Aunt Evelyn.
b. Grandpa sent Aunt Evelyn a package.

the Verber and the Verbed tests show that Grandpa is the sender, and the package is the sent, as (15) shows:

⁴ Of course, more research will be needed to assess this proposal’s cross-linguistic application.

- (15) a. Grandpa is the sender.
 b. #The package is the sender.
 c. #This is the sent Grandpa.
 d. This is the sent package.

What about *Aunt Evelyn*? Let us apply the Verber and Verbed tests to her:

- (16) a. #Aunt Evelyn is the sender.
 b. #This is the sent Aunt Evelyn.

She is neither the sender nor the sent, as (16) shows. Let us now test the Verbedhood of *Aunt Evelyn* and the package with two other tests for under-goerhood, since both objects can occupy a slot immediately to the right of the verb in English.⁵

The first test comes from Dowty (1991: 557), based on a test discussed in Bresnan (1982: 27), Wasow (1977: 344), and Williams (1980). It shows a difference between the first object and the second object. The latter does not allow the ‘unverbed’ entailment, whereas the first does:⁶

- (17) a. #This is the unsent Aunt Evelyn.
 b. This is the unsent package.

The second tests the omissibility of one of the two objects (Somers 1984). Notice that (18a) is entailed by (14). On the other hand, (18b) is grammatical but not entailed by (14).

- (18) a. Grandpa sent a package.
 b. #Grandpa sent Aunt Evelyn.

This omissibility test will also help in distinguishing the Verbed from a second object. Again, *the package* passes three tests of direct objecthood, whereas *Aunt Evelyn* passes none.

What, then, can we call *Aunt Evelyn*? First, she is an indirect object, as shown by the preposition *to*, one of the two prepositions that can introduce a dative object in English. *The package* cannot take *to* (*I sent Aunt Evelyn

⁵ Since RRG’s assignment of LS depends on the order of arguments, it is necessary to stipulate that with a preposition, the human object is a Recipient, but when dative shift applies, the human object is Undergoer (Portero Muñoz 2003: 140; Van Valin, LaPolla 1997: 336). Such a move is unnecessary with this proposal.

⁶ Their test would use ‘the unsent package.’ I have extended it to ‘this is the unsent package’ to turn the string into a proposition, since propositions can be entailed, but strings cannot.

to a package; *I sent to a package). Second, she can be permuted with the other object in what is known as dative shift, another test of indirect objecthood in English, as shown in (14b). Third, she can be described as the *sendee*. From 1300 to 1600, at least 28 *-ee* nouns are attested in English, with 16 of them referring to indirect objects, 6 to human direct objects, and the other 6 to objects that can be direct or indirect (Bengtsson, 1927: 92–100). A common *-ee* noun in contemporary English is *addressee*. It is used to refer to people to whom letters, packages, messages, etc., are sent. (A few other *-ee* nouns whose referent is an indirect object include *committee*, *grantee*, *lessee*, *licensee*, *patentee*, *payee*, *referee*, *sendee*, *vendee*, etc.) Clearly, *the package* is the sent. As for *Aunt Evelyn*, she is definitely not the sent but the *sendee*, as the previous *-ee* nouns suggest.

I claim that a theory of thematic roles that requires the roles of Verber, Verbed, and Verbee is more predictive and restrictive than RRG's macroroles and Dowty's Proto-Roles. The following analysis of *-ee* noun formation in English supports this proposal.

4. From Addressees and Grantees to Nominees and Appointees

As shown by Bengtsson (1927), Jespersen (1923), and Marchand (1960), among others, *-ee* nouns initially referred to indirect objects. However, according to Barker, 53 percent of *-ee* nouns in English have a direct object as a referent. Significantly, as Barker observes, all *-ee* direct object nouns have three things in common with prototypical indirect objects: they are human; episodically linked to a verb stem; and lack volitional control. Thus, if we were to propose a rule that took as input direct objects and "returned" indirect objects, we would find it is common in several languages. It was formulated in González (1998: 161) as:

(19) Rule of Dative Overriding of the Accusative:

A single animate object tends to be marked with the dative instead of the accusative when it is as high in the animacy hierarchy as the subject and particularly when it is higher.⁷

⁷ The rule is stated as a tendency, because other factors play a role. Some animates are marked with the accusative, and a few inanimates can also be marked with the dative, particularly those that might as well be the subject. A discussion of both those cases is beyond the scope of this article.

This rule easily accounts for all of the Verbeds that are marked as if they were Verbees; that is, it accounts for 53 percent of word-type occurrences of *-ee* nouns in English. Added to the 16 percent of indirect object word-types of *-ee* nouns, a Verbee role plus the rule of dative overriding accounts for 69 percent of the word-type *-ee* nouns in Barker.

Readers familiar with Spanish *leísmo* (pronominalizing a direct object with a dative instead of an accusative clitic) will realize that referring to a nominated, trained, evacuated, or interviewed person as a *nominee*, *trainee*, *evacuee*, or *interviewee* is a clear case of *leísmo* in English. *Leísmo* has been thought to be a dialectal phenomenon from Spanish (Alonso 1962: 406–7; Fernández Ramírez 1987: 43; García 1975: 328; Gili y Gaya 1961: 232–35; Lapesa 1983: 405–6, 471–72; Marcos Marín 1978: 42; Penny 1991: 121–22; Real Academia Española, 1985: 204–5, 424–25; Whitley 2002: 172; Zamora Vicente 1960: 344), but the following examples show that *leísmo* is a cross-linguistic and highly predictive rule of case-marking overriding.

The marking of a single human object with dative is attested in many languages and not restricted to so-called lexical datives.

- (20) Fortuna favet fortibus. (Latin)
 fortune-nom favour-3 sg brave-dat
 Fortune favors the brave. (Proverb, cited by Van Hoeske 1996: 7).
- (21) (a) Mich / mir ekelt vor fetten Speisen. (German)
 Me-acc me-dat nauseates before fatty victuals
 I'm nauseated by fatty food/fatty food nauseates me. (Draye 1996: 194)
 (b) Mir graut.
 me DAT horrifies.
 I'm horrified. (Heinz & Matiasek 1994: 214)
- (22) Gelas uqvars Nino. (Georgian)
dat he-loves-her-I-4 nom
 Gela loves Nino. (Harris 1984: 269)

Notice that the Georgian example is glossed with *love*, an assigner of “structural” accusative in many languages. Even if it is like Spanish *gustar* (a lexical dative), the intuition of marking a single human object with dative instead of accusative is still observationally adequate.

In addition to marking a direct object with the dative instead of the accusative (as in [23a]), Japanese also allows a dative/accusative alternation of a human participant in causative constructions, when the verb is transitive. The alternation of accusative/dative is so strong that it even occurs with

intransitive verbs in Japanese (23b, c) and Spanish (23d, e). The difference in meaning has been explained in Japanese linguistics as a contrast favoring a coercive versus a noncoercive reading (Kishimoto 1996; Shibatani 1976: 243). The terms used in Spanish are direct versus indirect causation (Moore 1996: 146). Other terms used are manipulative versus permissive (Marantz 1984). The distinction is the same.

- (23) (a) John ga Mary ni soodansita.
nom dat consult-past
 John consulted Mary. (Kuno 1973: 347)
- (b) Masao-ga Hanako-o hasir-ase-ta.
 Masao-nom Hanako-acc run-cause-past
 Masao made Hanako run.
- (c) Masao-ga Hanako-ni hasir-ase-ta
 Masao-nom Hanako-dat run-cause-past
 Masao had Hanako run.
- (d) Lo hizo correr.
 Him-acc made run (s/he made him run). (Moore 1996: 146)
- (e) Le hizo correr.
 Him-dat made run (s/he had him run). (Moore 146)

Similar examples are attested for French (Lamiroy & Delbecque 1999: 63), Marathi (Joshi 1989, ex. 1; quoted by Davis 2001: 30), Nepali (Givón 1997: 31), Brazilian Portuguese (Rozana Naves, personal communication 2003), Romanian (Manoliu-Manea 1995; quoted in Lamiroy & Delbecque 1999: 69), Russian (Croft 1993: 55), to cite just a few.

Thus, *-ee* nouns are referents of true indirect objects (Verbees) or human Verbeds who are seen as Verbees, because animacy plays a prominent role in languages.

5. Nondirect *-ee* Nouns

So far, we have shown that *-ee* nouns pick out nominalizations of dative or accusative human objects as referents. Thus, *-ee* nouns are indirect objects or human direct objects, and by virtue of being human objects, they are sentient, episodically linked to a verb stem, and lack volitional control, as Barker (1998) observed. About 30 percent of word-type *-ee* nouns must still be accounted for. Bengtsson chronicles the appearance of the first *-ee* nouns and divides them into indirect object nouns, direct object nouns, and nouns that can be used as indirect or direct objects. This classification mainly refers

to direct and indirect objects, but there is yet another possibility. Indirect nouns can also refer to objects that are not direct (= accusative) or indirect (= dative), because they are introduced by a preposition different from *to/for*, the two prepositions that introduce datives in English. Consider these examples:

- (24) a. The psychologist experimented on the experimentee. (Barker 1998: 705)
 b. She gazed at him. (707)

When the object of a governed preposition happens to be human, its referent will be predicted by dative overriding to be a Verbee. Although those objects are neither accusative nor dative, they pass the test of passivization, a well-established—albeit not sufficient—test for objecthood. Interestingly, most of the indirect examples from Bengtsson that do not refer to indirect objects refer to verbs that can be used transitively or intransitively. She notes:

- (25) a. Shoot a person E_i shoot at a person
 b. Meet a person E_i meet with a person
 c. Laugh at a person⁸

Although each of these alternations sometimes differs in meaning (*shooting at a person* does not necessarily imply hitting the target, whereas *shooting the person* does), they can be exchanged in some contexts without a relevant difference in meaning. They are clearly different from cases that require a preposition (*depend on*) or cannot take it (**seek for*).

To summarize, we would expect nouns episodically linked to nondirect objects whose preposition is governed to be referred to with an *-ee* noun, if those objects are human. This prediction is borne out by all of the examples discussed in Barker and Bengtsson. Furthermore, this analysis predicts that if *gazee* (a person gazed at) is a well-attested word in English, *barkee* (a person barked at by a dog) should be possible as well. Portero Muñoz (2003:

⁸ This example is the only one that does not have a transitive/intransitive alternation, but the object of *laugh* easily passivizes, as observed by Jespersen:

In such a sentence as

Everybody laughed at Jim,

Laughed, of course, is intransitive; *Jim* is governed by the preposition *at*. But the whole sentence may also be analysed in another way, *laughed at* may be called a transitive verb-phrase having *Jim* as its object. In this way we come to understand how it is possible to turn the sentence into the passive:

Jim was laughed at by everybody. (1933: 123)

If we had to determine who the *laughee* is, we would all agree that it is Jim, not us.

145) predicts that English should not have this noun. *Barkee* could never refer to the barker (the dog) but is likely to be applied to the barked at, when human.

6. Subject Verbees

The existence of subject (nominative) Verbees is clearly the main argument against a syntactic characterization of *-ee* nouns in English. More important, it is the main problem facing a predictive analysis of *-ee* based on a natural class. Barker states that:

The unaccusative hypothesis is supposed to provide especially good predictions for intransitive verbs: *-ee* should attach to unaccusatives (surface subject is an initial 2) but not to ergatives (surface subject is an initial 1 – there is no initial 2). The success of this claim, however, depends on analyzing the stem verbs of *escapee*, *standee*, *retiree*, *resignee*, *dinee*, *enlistee*, *returnee*, *advancee*, *arrivee*, *ascendee*, *deferee*, *embarkee*, *relaxee*, *sitee*, and *waitee*, etc. as unaccusatives. (Barker 1998: 707)

Thanks to the UH, we know that the subject of a subset of intransitive verbs is an underlying object. This section will argue that the only participant involved with *-ee* nouns episodically linked to these verbs is aptly described as the Verbed. It will also show that for some of these verbs, the single participant is also the Verber. That double role derives from the animacy hierarchy and has already been recognized by Anderson (cited by Blake 2001: 83), Davis (2001: 104), and Van Valin (1990: 256), among others.

Let us begin with (26):

- (26) a. Margarita returned the blouse.
b. Margarita returned.

Let us now apply the Verber and Verbed tests to (26a):

- (27) a. Margarita is the returner.
b. #This is the returned Margarita.
c. #The blouse is the returner.
d. This is the returned blouse.

The entailments in (27) show that in (26a), *Margarita* is the returner, and *the blouse* is the returned. What is *Margarita* in (26b)? Let us apply the tests to (26b):

- (28) a. Margarita is the returner.
b. This is the returned Margarita.

With the intransitive predicate in (26b), *Margarita* is the returner and also the returned. If she returned, she is (has) returned. *Margarita* is a human returned; that is, a human Verbed; dative overriding predicts that she can be called a returnee. See Bauer (1987: 318) for some examples of the returnee being a returned person; that is, a person who has returned. See also Safire (1982: 63–64).

On the other hand, *the blouse* is just the returned. Sentences like:

- (29) a. Margarita is gone.
b. Margarita is come.

are taken as evidence that these verbs are unaccusative in English. “*Come, go, and appear* are prototypical unaccusative verbs” (Levin, Rappaport Hovav 1999: 215). Return (=come back) is clearly similar. In the corpus (letters and comedies) examined by Rydén & Brorström (1987: 190), the use of *be* as the perfect auxiliary with intransitive verbs has evolved from 10 percent for *have* and 90 percent for *be* in the sixteenth century to the reverse in the nineteenth century. The use of *be* was particularly favored by verbs of movement and unaccusative verbs like *arrive, come, fall, get (=go, come), go, recover, return, rise, turn* (190). Even today, *be* is sometimes used (with human subjects) with verbs like *come, do, finish, go, retire, return, turn* (210–11).

Consider now *arrive*, perhaps the prototypical unaccusative verb.

- (30) a. The mail arrived.
b. The mail carrier arrived.

Let us now apply the Verber and Verbed test to each sentence:

- (31) a. #The mail is the arriver.
b. This is the arrived mail (that has not yet been processed).
c. The mail carrier is the arriver.
d. This is the arrived mail carrier.

The mail is the arrived, and since it is brought, it can hardly be said to be the arriver. *The mail carrier*, however, seems to be the arrived and the

arriver. Van Valin (1990: 256) discusses evidence from Italian to show that the subject of *go* is the goer and the gone (actor and theme, in his terms). In a sentence like *John moved*, John is the agent as well as the patient (Anderson 1977, cited by Blake 2001: 83). In terms of this proposal, *John* is the mover and the moved. When an event of going is complete, the participant is said to have reached a destination. The same participant has also been successful in leaving; that is, the participant is also gone from a source. Thus, if the single participant of an unaccusative predicate is inanimate, it is widely agreed that it is the Verbed and only the Verbed. When the single participant of an unaccusative predicate is animate, s/he seems to be playing two roles simultaneously: the Verber and the Verbed.

Consider an event of bringing (up) a suitcase to the second floor (32) or going (up) to the second floor (34).

(32) The bellboy brought the suitcases to the second floor.

The bringing up can be more aptly predicated of an inanimate participant; the going up almost exclusively of an animate one, which does not exclude an animate participant from being brought up by another animate. Let us apply the Verber and Verbed tests to these sentences:

- (33) a. The bellboy is the bringer.
 b. #This is the brought bellboy.
 c. #The suitcases are the bringer.
 d. These are the brought suitcases.

Let us consider now the going up.

(34) The bellboy went (up) to the second floor.

What is the bellboy? He certainly is the goer. Crucially, he is also the gone. If he went up, he is gone (up).

Notice, by the way, that an English sentence like *She is gone* refers more to the event of leaving a place (the accomplishment of leaving) than to reaching a goal. If *Rosa left for San Francisco*, it is true that she left (=she is gone), but it will not be true that she went to San Francisco until she reaches her destination. If *Rosa left for San Francisco*, she can be said to be gone when her leaving is complete, although she might not have gotten to San Francisco one day when traffic was impossible, and she decided to turn around. In Spanish, the equivalents of *go* and *leave* are *go* and *go + reflexive*, respectively. As is well known, for some scholars a reflexive clitic “absorbs” one of the valences of the verb (Alsina

1996; Burzio 1986; Grimshaw 1982; Kayne 1975, 1990; Marantz 1984, etc.). The “absorbed” participant cannot show up in the sentence, since it has been replaced by a clitic.

- (35) a. *Rosa went.
 (Cf. Spanish **Rosa fue*)
 b. Rosa went to San Francisco.
 (Cf. Spanish *Rosa fue a San Francisco*)
 c. Rosa went away.
 (Cf. Spanish *Rosa se fue*)

(35a) is ungrammatical, because *go* seems to require a locative phrase. (35b) is grammatical, because it has a locative phrase (*to San Francisco*). What is the difference between (35b) and (35c)? (35b) is an event of going, plus a destination. By Somers’s test of the nonomissibility of a complement, the destination is a complement of location (1984: 509). (35c) is an event of going, but the addition of the particle (*away*) seems to do two things: it satisfies the valence of the locative phrase, in the sense that the sentence is ungrammatical without it, and it seems to “send” the listener or reader from the final destination to the source, for it seems to refer more to “leaving” a source location than getting to a destination.

Let us apply the Verber and Verbed tests to (35c):

- (36) a. Rosa is the goer.
 b. This is the gone Rosa. (Cf. Rosa is gone).

The tests return good results in both cases, in the sense that both the Verber and the Verbed tests yield entailments from (35c). These two tests with *go* are consistent with proposals by Blake (2001: 83), Davis (2001: 104), and Van Valin (1990: 256) that a single participant can play two roles at the same time. Now it should be clearer why *the mail* is the arrived, but *the mail carrier* is the arriver and the arrived. Since the mail is not human, it cannot be referred to as an arrivee; but referring to the mail carrier as the arrivee is expected, by virtue of the carrier being a human arrived.

This double role of animate participants with verbs of movement explains an attested token of arrivee, which Barker (1998: 720–21) finds unexpected, because the subject of the arriving event at issue in Barker’s example (“In Mamet’s equally brief one-acter, the devil – called the interrogator – harasses a new arrivee named Bobby Gould” [720]) is agentive yet suggests that the person will be subjected to torment and is therefore deprived of volitional control. The arriver in Barker’s example happens to refer to a human, and

dative overriding predicts that s/he should be referred to as an arrivee. Indeed, if *-er* formation avoids unaccusative stems, as Burzio (1986: 161) has observed, the ungrammaticality of *arriver leads us to expect an arrivee. The proposal of an animate as the arriver and the arrived predicts the terms arriver and arrivee for a human and an *arriver and arrived for a nonhuman. Barker himself (1998: 721) observes that “arriving is usually the intended goal of an Agent,” an observation that supports the claim that, when animate, the arrivee is also the arriver.

Although it may seem counterintuitive at first, a human Verbed should be referred to as a Verbee, when s/he is the “surface” subject of an unaccusative verb. Consider an example with *escape*:

(37) Twenty prisoners escaped at 3:00 A.M.

Let us apply the Verber and Verbed tests:

- (38) a. The twenty prisoners are the escapers.
b. These are the twenty escaped prisoners.

Both strings are entailed by (37). To be sure, *these are the escaped prisoners* was found more felicitous than *the twenty prisoners are the escapers* by all of ten native speakers polled. The online Merriam Webster Dictionary glosses an *escapee* as an escaped prisoner (circa 1866). Barker (1998: 709) observes (as have others before) a correlation between *-er* and *-ee* nouns.

- (39) Escapee/escaper, absentee/absenter, arrivee/arriver, dinee/diner, deferee/deferrer, infiltree/infiltrator, mergee/merger, sequestree/sequestrator.

Of the preceding examples, all but the first three are clearly transitive. Two are used intransitively in English (*escape* and *arrive*), and *absent* is reflexive (that is, the Verber and the Verbed are the same participant). To this list, we can add *refugee*, which Marchand (1960: 210) finds similar to *absentee*, because both come from the French *s’absenter* and *se réfugier*. Jespersen (1933: 111) states that *absent* is one of a few English verbs always used reflexively. If true reflexivity is identity of subject and object, then reflexive verbs are those in which the Verber and the Verbed (or Verbee) are the same participant. For each of these four verbs (*absent*, *arrive*, *escape*, *refuge*), their single participant can easily be thought of as the Verber and the Verbed. It is not hard to understand why: nobody can *absent*, *arrive*, *escape*, or *refuge* somebody else, which supports the claim that the absenter and the absentee, the arriver and the arrivee, the escaper and the escapee, and the refuger and the refugee are one and the same participant. (The mail, however, cannot be the arriver, since it must be brought).

Likewise, it is not difficult to see how an animate – but not a thing – is the arriver and the arrived, the goer and the gone, the returner and the returned. The observation that reflexivity constitutes identity of subject and direct object (or subject and indirect object) is not new. What is new is that at least a set of “intransitive” verbs, including apparently ergative verbs like *go* and *escape*, seem to be better analyzed as reflexive; that is, verbs in which the same referent has the roles of Verber and Verbed at the same time. That claim seems to be warranted for all animate single participants of unaccusative verbs.

In a sense, the Verbed role of unaccusative verbs (crucially, those unaccusative verbs that Barker finds troublesome for a syntactic account of *-ee* nouns) seems more natural and basic than the Verber role. The latter seems to be somewhat parasitic on the former, as the more natural paraphrase in (38b) as opposed to (38a) suggests. Let us make up some sentences using Bresnan’s past participial test with some of the verbs in Barker (1998: 707). The sentences in (40) sound natural in English, whereas paraphrases with *-er* (as in [38a]) sound somewhat artificial:

- (40) a. The escaped prisoners are still at large.
 b. The retired Colonel was driving her husband crazy.
 c. The resigned cabinet member was criticized by the party.
 d. The enlisted soldiers showed up for training with a big smile.
 e. The returned soldiers were happy to be home.
 f. The arrived participants were being checked-in.
 h. The waited (on) customers were enjoying appetizers by then.

These sentences can, in fact, be easily turned into absolutes, another test of unaccusativity (e.g.: Alsina 1996: 101; Rosen 1984: 48; Van Valin 1990: 239), as in (41). The sentences in (42) are ungrammatical, because the verbs are not unaccusatives:

- (41) a. With the prisoners escaped, the whole town was on alert.
 b. With all the participants seated, the speech could begin.
 c. With the president retired, the vice-president was to become busier than ever.
 d. With all the tourists embarked, the cruise ship was ready to sail.
- (42) a. *With the prisoners worked, the whole town was on alert.
 b. *With all the participants swum, the competition finally ended.
 c. *With the president run, the vice-president was to become busier than ever.
 d. *With all the tourists whistled, the cruise ship was ready to sail.

In short, *-ee* nouns refer to a human object, whether Verbee or Verbed, including the single animate participant (nominative) of an unaccusative or unaccusativized verb as well as a human object governed by a preposition. This answers the challenge by Barker (1998: 707), cited at the beginning of this section, and it also presents more evidence to concur with Portero Muñoz that intransitive verbs that allow *-ee* noun formation are unaccusative. The present analysis shows that when human, the single participant is not just the Undergoer; it is the Undergoer and also the Actor, or in terms of this proposal, the Verbed and the Verber.

7. *-Ee* Nouns for Which There Is no Corresponding Verbal Argument

Barker argues that a number of *-ee* nouns exist without a corresponding verbal argument. Three of Barker's examples are quoted for illustration:

- (43) a. It might be safe to pluck it up. Safe to whom? To the plucker or the pluckee?
 b. ... how one man did brutally twist the knee of another for a good ten minutes, and how the twistee groaned ...
 c. The party gang ... had been gung ho for slitting a few throats as long as the slittees were sound asleep. (1998: 708)

Barker states that the person involved in an event of amputation, twisting, slitting, plucking, etc., is not part of the syntactic argument structure of the verb but is no doubt part of the semantics. I agree that the entity (usually human!) involved in these types of events is part of the semantic argument structure of the verb. Whether the non-Verber participant is or is not part of the syntactic argument structure of the verb might be somewhat controversial. True, the beneficiary or maleficiary is not expressed as an indirect object but shows up as a modifier of the Verbed more often than not. Consider these sentences:

- (44) a. The doctor amputated John's leg.
 b. % The doctor amputated a leg (from John).
 c. The thieves stole Grandma's life savings.
 d. % The thieves stole the life savings.

Barker himself (1998: 714) states that (44b) is an unlikely sentence in English. (44d) strikes me as a sentence that would require more context or a possessor modifier, as in (44c). Thus, the Verbee (amputee or stealee) does not show up as an indirect object in English but as a possessor phrase – the modifier of the direct object, or Verbed. It is worth noting that the sentences in (43) and (44) are rendered with true indirect objects in Spanish, as shown below in (46). If we were to express the plucking, twisting, and slitting events in (43) with sentences similar to those in (44), we would get (45):

- (45) a. *The beautician plucked the facial hair.
 b. The beautician plucked Jane's facial hair.
 c. *This man brutally twisted an arm.
 d. This man brutally twisted Kim's arm.
 e. The party gang slit a few throats.

Only in one out of three sentences the possessor phrase seems to be readily omissible (45e). Interestingly, it is also an example that suggests rather strongly that the gang was slitting someone else's throat. Thus, although the beneficiary or the maleficiary (Verbee) in these events does not show up as a true indirect object (a dative-marked object co-occurring with an accusative marked one), it is part of the semantics of the verb. The fact that the person affected shows up more often than not suggests that s/he is part of the verb's syntactic argument structure. Furthermore, the fact that speakers produce and readily understand these sentences should lend psychological reality to an implicit dative object, the same way that speakers are aware of an implicit (direct) object with *eat* and *cook* in English, among many other verbs that can readily omit the underlying object. Speakers know that something is always cooked or eaten when we say that *the children ate* and that *our father cooks*, although such objects need not appear in the sentence. Readers familiar with languages with robust dative marking may be able to confirm that the examples in (43) and (44) are true Verbees (true indirect objects) in those languages. I have been able to verify this claim with speakers of Catalan, Italian, Japanese, Spanish, and Russian. A Russian speaker (Kurt Shaw, personal communication 2003) tells me that the examples with inalienable possession are dative, but those with alienable possession will use genitive.

The sentences in (46) show that the most idiomatic Spanish rendering of the events in (44) and (45) deploys a true dative:

- (46) a. El doctor le amputó un pie a Juan.
 The doctor nom dat clitic amputated a foot acc to John dat
 The doctor amputated John's leg.
- b. Unos ladrones le robaron todos los ahorros a la abuela.
 Some thieves nom dat clitic stole all the savings acc to the
 Grandma dat
 Some thieves stole Grandma's life savings.
- c. La esteticista le arrancó los pelos de la cara a Juana.
 The beautician nom dat clitic plucked the hair of the face acc to
 Jane dat
 The beautician plucked Jane's facial hair.
- d. Un hombre le torció brutalmente el brazo a Kim.
 A man nom dat clitic twisted brutally the arm acc to Kim dat
 A man brutally twisted Kim's arm.
- e. La pandilla les cortó la garganta a unos rivales.
 The gang nom dat clitic cut the throat acc to some rivals dat
 The party gang slit a few throats.
- f. La pandilla cortó unas gargantas.
 The party gang nom cut a few throats acc
 The gang slit a few throats.

In short, although nouns like *amputee*, *stealee*, and *pluckee* are not explicit syntactic arguments of their verb in English, they are true Verbees in other languages. Indeed, their existence in English lends psychological reality to the role of Verbee. *Benefactee* and *malefactee* (Barker 1998: 716), among others, are also nouns not clearly derived from a verb stem. Bauer (1987: 315) notes that although the verb *benefact* exists, it is hardly common and “probably not the source of this formation.” He believes it may come from *beneficiary*. At any rate, he adds, *malefactee* cannot come from a nonexistent *malefact* verb.

Another noun not coming from a verb is *asylee*. These nouns are, in my opinion, evidence of the psychological reality of the Verbee role. The noun *spectator*, which, by the way, is not active, does not come from a putative verb to *spectate*. In this case, English seems to have borrowed the noun and not the verb, as Laurie Bauer pointed out to me (personal communication 2002). *Biographee* does not come from a verb either, but speakers do not have any problem in making sense of this noun. It is conceivable that one day English could have the corresponding verb by the well-known phenomenon of back-formation.

The role of Verbee is so strong that English – a language that has virtually replaced nominative and accusative (and sometimes dative) marking with word order – has kept alive a case-marking suffix from Old French

(the *-ee* of true indirect objects; that is, addressee, lessee) in nominalizing verbal objects. Sentences with dative-marked objects in other languages tend to be replaced in English with alternative constructions, when possible, as the following examples show. These sentences are rendered with dative-marked objects in Spanish (and, presumably, in other languages), even when the Verbee is nonhuman (47d', 47f')

- (47) a. The mugger robbed Tom of \$ 45.00. (Van Valin & LaPolla 1997: 140)
 a'. El asaltante le robó \$ 45.00 a Tom. (*Tom* is marked with dative)
 b. Kim cuts his children's hair.
 b'. Kim les corta el pelo a sus hijos. (*sus hijos* is marked with dative)
 c. Jeff will present Mary with the award. (Van Valin & LaPolla 1997: 141)
 c'. Jeff le entregará el premio a María. (*María* is marked with dative)
 d. Tracy spread the bread with butter.
 d'. Tracy le untó mantequilla al pan. (*el pan* is marked with dative)
 e. Kim took the book from Mary.
 e'. Kim le quitó el libro a María. (*María* is marked with dative)
 f. He emptied/drained the water from the tank. (Van Valin & LaPolla 1997: 146)
 f'. (Él) Le vació/drenó el agua al tanque. (*el tanque* is marked with dative).

Let us consider an example that, we hope, is a novel use of a “dative” in English. Let us assume a state of affairs in which a hurricane destroyed Kim's vacation house. I asked ten native speakers to determine who the destroyer, destroyed, and destroyee were, and all of them picked Kim as the destroyee. Interestingly, if this sentence were translated into Spanish, two possibilities come to mind:

- (48) a. Un huracán destruyó la casa de vacaciones de Kim.
 A hurricane destroyed Kim's vacation house.
 b. Un huracán le destruyó la casa de vacaciones a Kim.
 A hurricane nom dat clitic destroyed the vacation house acc
 to Kim dat

Both are acceptable, but out of ten native speakers polled as to which sentence is more “Spanishy” (more idiomatic in the language), all ten chose (48b), the one with an indirect object, instead of (48a), the one with the possessive phrase.

To summarize, although several Verbees do not show up as true dative XPs in English, the role of Verbee is strong enough to allow the productive use and understanding of *-ee* nouns that are no doubt grounded in the semantics of a beneficiary or maleficiary role, more generally in the Verbee role. Nouns like *benefactee*, *malefactee*, *amputee*, *twistee* support positing a Verbee role, because their existence and productivity are evidence of its psychological reality. The role of Verbee (dative-marked nouns of three-place predicates) is so strong that it even shows up in syntactic structures that are not syntactically dative, although closely related: gaining or losing possession is the main meaning behind dative. That XPs and even modifiers of DPs – indicating gaining or losing possession – are seen as Verbees should come as no surprise to those well acquainted with the meaning and expression of dative across languages: one of the categories of dative in languages with robust explicit dative marking is precisely possessive dative. Nor should it come as a surprise that beneficiary and maleficiary are referred to as benefactee and malefactee (Barker 1998: 716), in spite of the fact that neither term is a verb stem. I claim that this formation is evidence of the psychological reality of the Verbee role.

8. Other Apparently Difficult Cases: Catapultee, Razee, Attendee, Standee

Catapultee and *razee* seem like exceptions to Barker's sentient constraint. However, with dative overriding, they are not exceptions at all. If ships, (nice) cars, airplanes, trains, etc. can be referred to as *she* or *her* instead of *it* and *its*, dative overriding predicts that vessels in general can be referred to using *-ee* nouns when they are in object position, as are the instances cited in Barker (1998: 711). They are Verbees, because they are objects commonly referred to as human. They are not an exception to Barker's sentient constraints on *-ee* nouns, as he himself noted. Once a tendency to refer to a ship, car, or airplane as *she* and *her* has been observed, dative overriding can explain why we find *razees* and *catapultees* instead of *razed* (ships) and *catapulted* (airplanes). As Jespersen (1923: 112) observed, *-ee* nouns reduce a whole phrase ("the person to whom something is sold") to a single word ("*vendee*"). No reduction is possible when we talk about a *renovated building*; however, a *nominee* avoids the almost unheard-of *nominated person*. More generally, the productive use of Verbees overrides the uncommon *verbed persons*.

Dressman (1994: 159) accepts a passive sense in nouns like *absentee*, *escapee*, *debauchee*, *refugee*, *resignee*, and *retiree*, since the verbs from which

they come are reflexive in French. He notes that explaining attested forms like *dilutee*, *attendee*, and *standee* is more difficult, and I admit that I do not have anything to say about *dilutee*, but the unaccusative analysis outlined in section 6 can shed some light on the last two terms.

There are at least two senses of *attendee*. The first is defined in the *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary* as “a person who is present on a given occasion or at a given place. Attendees at a convention.” Although *attendee* seems active, it seems less so when compared with *presenter*. *Attendees* at conferences, conventions, or church are clearly less active than *presenters* and *preachers*. An administrator at the school where I work was surprised to find a sign that read “parking reserved for church attendees”, and he wondered whether it should have read *attenders*, since church attendees, he thinks, are somewhat “agentive”. Church attendees are somewhat active in the sense that they are churchgoers, but their putative activeness loses a lot of force if we think of the preacher and the preachees, as Dressman (1994: 157) put it, “During the sermon, the minister is the preacher and the congregation are the preachees.” Church attendees are clearly more passive than pastors or priests.

The second sense of *attendee* is that of a person being helped by a clerk. Dressman (1994: 159) wonders why not simply have *stander* and *attender*. Barker (1998: 703) observes that the word *corresponder* is presumably blocked by *correspondent*. By the same token, *attender* can be thought to be blocked by *attendant*. The pair *attendant/attendee* avoids the difficulty that would arise in processing the potentially ambiguous *attender*. The attended, being people, are predicted by dative overriding to be referred to as *attendees*. In addition, *attendees* at a convention or conference nicely contrast with *presenters*. The apparently more established pair *presenter/attendee* (at a convention) invites less ambiguity than the pair *presenter/attender*. The same could be said of unequivocal pairs like *clerk/attendee* or *attendant/attendee*, as opposed to potentially more equivocal pairs like *attendant/attender* or *clerk/attender*.

Two of the meanings of the verb *stand* are to cause to stand (set upright) or to support oneself on the feet in an erect position (*Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*). Although you can stand (that is, set upright) another person and even a thing, the most common use of this verb describes maintaining a standing position on your own. *Stand* is also used when one is assuming a standing position, but that use seems less frequent. People may be forced or caused to stand, as when seats are not available, for example. The person standing is then the *stander* and the *stood*. There is good evidence that this verb describes a “reflexive” event more often than not: we stand up many more times (assume a standing position) than we stand other people up (as when helping a child who is learning to

walk). In fact, *to stand up* is reflexive in Romance languages: in Spanish, *pararse*. Since passive and reflexivization can be described with the present proposal as Verber deletion, if the stander = stood, the person standing is more the stood than the stander. By virtue of being human, s/he can be referred to as the *standee*.

There are, then, good reasons for not having *stander* and *attender* and, instead, *standee* and *attende*. I have seen several real-life uses of *standee* and *attende*, while I have only seen *stander* and *attender* in Dressman's article. It is true that less familiar *-ee* nouns sound somewhat jocular when they are heard or seen for the first time, as observed in just about any article on the subject, but the common use of *advisee*, *appointee*, *attende*, *arrestee*, *detainee*, *nominee*, and *retiree* tell us that these nouns are here to stay. The *-ee* nouns will cease sounding jocular and unnatural as our understanding of them improves.

We have still not accounted for a class of words. The so-called metalinguistic terms: *advancee*, *causee*, *demotee*, *raisee*, *possessee*, etc. Some, perhaps most, of the referents of these nouns are human. For those that are not, there is at least anecdotal support to treat them as *-ee* nouns: tree diagrams have mothers and sister nodes, which may have played a role. This issue is left for further research.

9. Conclusions

As Barker (1998: 721) points out, “the combination of sentience, episodic linking, and lack of volitional control add up to a nontrivial set of semantic entailments.” This set of semantic entailments is clearly satisfied by beneficiaries, maleficiaries, recipients, goals, experiences, and even sources. All of these roles are usually expressed as dative objects. All of them, in turn, can be subsumed under the role of Verbee. I claim that the role of Verbee is the only semantic role needed by native speakers to map those objects onto dative objects in English, Spanish (*Verbatario*), and presumably other languages. Thus, there is a semantic role for *-ee* nouns in English and a *verbal one*, to be sure. There is no need to propose a “thematic role independent of the verbal system” (1998: 710), as Barker felt.

Section 4 showed that human Verbeds share with Verbees exactly the same set of entailments referred to in the preceding paragraph. These shared entailments together with the rule of dative overriding in (11) offer a compelling explanation for why most types of *-ee* nouns (53 percent) refer to direct objects. It should not be controversial that human direct objects outnumber indirect objects in most languages, as they clearly do in English.

It is also not controversial that direct objects are the most natural sounding *-ee* nouns of all. Speakers who might find nouns like *arrivee*, *mergee*, and *divorcee* somewhat playful and “un-Englishy” will have less resistance to accept nouns like *grantee*, *lessee*, *recommendee*, and *sendee*. No native speaker perceives any oddness in nouns like *appointee*, *detainee*, *nominee*, or *even escapee*, *retiree*, *enlistee*, to name three common unaccusatives. As for its motivation, dative overriding is a rule needed in the grammar of several languages to explain the marking of nominative-dative instead of nominative-accusative, when the single direct object is human. Indeed, the fact that the same rule made possible this highly predictable analysis of *-ee* nouns in English is in itself a strong motivation for it.

The analysis just proposed was possible with the Verber/Verbed Argument Selection Principle, a more predictive and restrictive theory of linking than Dowty’s Proto-Roles and RRG’s macroroles. This analysis has also answered many questions raised by Barker and explained *-ee* nouns for which Portero Muñoz either had no explanation (*amputee*, *biographee*, *razees*, *catapultee*) or proposed a hybrid argument-adjunct (*experimentee*).

In short, an *-ee* noun refers to a human object, whether Verbee or Verbed, including the single animate participant (nominative) of an unaccusative or unaccusativized verb as well as a human object governed by a preposition. A linking theory that requires only three entailment-based roles (Verber, Verbed, and Verbee) and a rule of dative overriding of the accusative offers an elegant answer to the question of what a possible referent for an *-ee* noun in English is: a human non-Verber.

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