

## Multiple Class Membership Verbs (A syntactic –Semantic Study)

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### المخلص

يتناول هذا البحث جانباً من الأفعال التي تعطي معاني متنوعة عندما تكون متبوعة بتكملة الفعل الخاص به، وهذا يعني أن ما يكمل الفعل يحدد معاني هذا الفعل الثانوية واستعمالاته. لقد أعطيت أمثلة كثيرة لتسلط الضوء على هذه الأفعال المذكورة آنفاً. إن معاني الفعل المتعددة تتأثر بالتكملة التي تتبع الفعل والطريقة التي تؤثر تكملة الفعل بها على معنى الفعل الرئيس أو الأساس دلاليًا وقواعدياً. إن الكلمات التي تتم معنى الفعل تكون كلمات حتمية وليست اختيارية لإتمام معنى الفعل. فالتكملة تحلل الفعل من الناحية الدلالية والقواعدية. ويتأثر أيضاً المعنى الخاص بالفعل من ناحية أخرى، بالتعبير المجازي أو النص التركيبي أو التلحين الصوتي أو المعنى المقصود للمتكلم أو طبيعة الموقف. يمكن أيضاً أن تغير هذه الخصائص التركيب والمعنى الدلالي للفعل.

### Abstract

This research deals with some of the verbs that give certain meanings, when they followed by a certain complementation of the verb. This means that verb complementation restricts the verb uses and meanings in certain verbs. Many examples given to shed the light on these verbs mentioned earlier. The different meanings of verbs are affected by the complementation that follows them and the way that complementation can affect the original meaning of the verb itself semantically and syntactically. The items that follow these verbs, are obligatory and not optional, complete the verb meaning. The complementation restricts the syntactic and semantic analysis of the verb. In addition, other functions affect the original meaning of the verb like metaphor, syntactic structure, intonation, the intended meaning of the speaker and other certain situations. These items can change the syntactic and semantic features of verbs.

### 1.1 Introduction:

The present research aims at investigating the verb complementation that affects the verb meaning and uses. In other words, it affects the syntactic and semantic relationships. Therefore,

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there are syntactic and semantic studies that happen in the clause patterns. Some verbs in English have these features (syntactic and semantic shifts).

Some verbs selected in this study to fulfill this aim. Therefore, verb complementation plays an important role in determining the meaning of the verb and its syntactic position. The complementation elements are obligatory for the completion of the verb meaning. Nevertheless, there are some intransitive verbs in English, which can be used with/without a complementation. Here, a semantic one does not accompany the syntactic shift.

The research adopts the model adopted by Quirk et al. (1985). Accordingly, seven clause patterns followed in this study.

## **1.2. The verb and its complementation**

As mentioned earlier, the verb complementation determines the verb meaning and its pattern. Quirk et al. (1985:1150) give the best definition of complementation. They state that the complementation is "a part of phrase or clause which follows a word and completes the specification of a meaning relationship which that word implies". Complementation may be either obligatory or optional on the syntactic level:

**1-** He got a surprise. (s v o ).

**2-** He is getting angry. (s v c ).

In (1), the verb (get) means (obtain), but in (2) it means (become). Roberts (1962:81) states that a verb cluster consists of a verb plus any of the stuff that may go with verbs in the various patterns: objects of any kind, predicate, nouns, adjectives, adverbs and preposition phrases". Thus, cluster means complementation in different term, when one of the elements that follow a certain verb is omitted, the meaning of the verb will be unacceptable:

**3-** He is getting angry. (s v c) acceptable.

**4-** He is getting. (s v) unacceptable.

This sentence is unacceptable for the verb (get) takes a complementation.

Quirk et al. (1985:1170) give type of verb complementation. These are (copular, monotransitive, complex transitive and ditransitive

complementation. The verbs that have a syntactic, a semantic one has called versatile or, multiple class verbs.

Studying and describing versatile verbs is similar to a game known (cross- word puzzle). There are horizontal and vertical syntactic shifts. The verb is at the center of these two shifts. See the following figure:



The figure seems to be close to a dichotomy given by Ferdinand de Saussure known as syntagmatic / Paradigmatic dichotomy only the end position changes. Notice the following:

- 5-** He got a surprise. (s v o)
- 6-** He is getting angry. (s v c)
- 7-** He got home. (s v A )
- 8-** He got through the window. (s v A )

Behre (1973: 17) asserts that (get) in (7) is equivalent to (return). The verb (get) has six clause patterns; each has a different pattern. See the following example:

- 9-** Bill got Susan a book on economic. (s v Oi Od)

In this clause, (get) ditransitive uses in this pattern. Heagman (1985:73) states that (get) in the "ditransitive construction the" has the sense, meaning (gave) as in (9).

- 10-** They get him angry. (svoc)

In (10), the verb (get) is complex transitive verb its meaning (make). This use is not found in the patterns (svo, svc, svA).

- 11-** He got himself into trouble (svoA).

In this pattern, (get) approaches to (cause to put). In addition, another meaning can be found in this pattern:

- 12-** Ah, you've got me there. (svoA)

In (12), Behre (1973: 12-13) points out that (get) has the meaning (catch). The adverb (there) and the direct object restrict the verb meaning. In addition, the context plays its own role in specifying the intended meaning of the speaker.

Another versatile verb is (keep). It has six clause patterns. Leech et al. (1982:84:85) mention that many verbs can occur in more

than one pattern, often with a noticeable or even extreme change in meaning. Thus, the elements that follow the verb change its basic meaning and enter into different clause patterns. Consider the following:

**13-**Jem keeps a dog. (svo)

In (13) (keep) is monotransitive verb, meaning (continue to have, not lose and preserve) (see Hornby, 1974: 462)

**14-** He kept quiet. (svc)

In this clause (keep) is copular verb because, it is followed by an adjective (Christophersen and Sandved, (1969:147) assert that so-called copulative ( keep) can not occur between two nominals.

It takes only adjectives as its complement. In the example given above, (keep) means (continue to be, remain in a specified condition) or (stay)

(Hornby, 1974: 463), (Zandvoot: 1972: 198), (Close, 1975: 196).

**15-** The piece of pie is keeping well. (SVA)

**16-** He was ill and had to keep to his bed. (SVA)

In (15), (keep) is a copular verb because of its inability to occur without the adjunct [(Quirk et al., 1985:1175;Eckersley and Eckersley,1960: 12].Accordingly, it is considered a verb of incomplete predication. While in (16) the verb (keep) means (stay, remain in a particular relationship to a place).

**17-**John is keeping Archie a piece of pie. (SVOiOd)

In this clause (keep) is diteransitive verb, meaning (cause to receive or maintain).

It is a restricted pattern and not common.

**18-**John is keeping Archie happy. (SVOC)

The use of (keep) in this pattern is causative. Thus, according to Hornby (1974:462) the meaning is (cause somebody or something to remain in a specified state). The complement (happy) is for object and not for the subject. The interpretation is:

**19-**Archie is happy. And not

**20-**John is happy.

**21-**John keeps her pet in the path. (S V O A)

In (21) the clause has adverbial, which is space adjunct. Its meaning approaches to (put). It is causative in this clause, the verb (put) is an action or motion verb but (keep) is a state one.

(Close (1975:216) states that (keep) can mean (prevent) when it has not the causative use), as in:

**22-Keep somebody / something from falling.**

The meaning of (keep) in the following clause is (detain) as in:

**23-Extra work kept me at the office.**

Thus, the verb (keep) has different clause patterns with different meanings. The verb (make) also has these features, Notice the following pattern:

**24-The ebb was now making. (S V)**

The verb is intransitive in (24) and its meaning is restricted to the ebb and flow of water .Hornby (1974: 513) mentions the meaning of (make) in this pattern is (begin to flow or ebb). While the meaning changes if the verb is used in this pattern:

**25-He made to reply. (S V A)**

In (25) the meaning is (behave as if about to do something). The adverbial restricts the verb meaning.

**26-She made a cake. (S V O)**

In this pattern, "make" has its common use or meaning. It is a monotransitive with a simple object. Most grammarians assert that the common use of "make" lies in this pattern, so, the meaning is (do, create, or construct). (See Allen, 1959: 175), (Hornby, 1974:513).

In some instances the meaning of "make" is not (do.....etc.) but (become). See the following Example:

**27-She made a good wife.**

Huddleston (1971:130) proves this and mentions that (27) is semantically similar to the intensive clause, as in:

**28-She became a good wife.**

This clause seems to be related to the pattern (SVO) but semantically is related to the intensive relation between the subject and the complement. Therefore, (27) cannot be passivized.

Schibsbye (1965: 5) states that a clause such as (27) is ambiguous without its context. He gives the following example to simplify the point:

**29-He made him a fine soldier.**

The clause (29) is ambiguous because it has two interpretations. The first is the subject (him) is either the (fine soldier) or the second, which is a direct object). Another pattern that has a different meaning for (make) as in:

**30-John made him a hero. (S V O C)**

In this pattern (make) can take (adjective or noun phrase) [(House and Herman, 1950: 250-251; Eckersley and Eckersley, 1960:11-12)] assert that "make" is factitive verb. It can be followed by a noun, or adjective as object complement. A verb that makes its object different sometimes named a factitive verb. Therefore, its meaning is (cause to be or become) (cause to happen). In the following clause (31), the verb (make) takes two objects. The first is indirect and the second is direct:

**31-Make me an offer. (S V Oi Od) (Suggest a price)**

Here, Also The flexibility of "make" can give certain meaning that restricts the special pattern (rare pattern, the meaning in (31) is (offer or propose). (See Hornby, 1974:519)

One of the important verbs that have more than one syntactic and semantic feature is (see). Notice

Alm- Arvius in her thesis (1993: 167) mentions the principle and secondary meanings of (see). She states that (see) can mean (perceive visually, perceive with eyes.....etc.

She adds that the secondary uses of (see) occur as a result of pragmatic expansions, which are non-critical meaning additions that seems to be suggested or even explicitly superimposed by the linguistic context. And (or, the extra- linguistic circumstances in which a particular (see) utterance is used, The semantic specification for the verb (see) can be noticed from metaphors, pragmatic restrictions and other figurative powers.

Saeed (1997:307) argues that the influence of metaphor plays an important role in restricting the meaning of the verb (see). Because metaphors are present in the speakers' minds, they exert influence over a wide range of linguistic behaviors; He adds that (Sweetser, 1990) mentions that with the Passage of time verbs of sense

perception in Indo- European languages have shown a consistent and wide spread tendency to shift from physical to the mental domain.

Saeed (p.308) adds that Sweetser's point is that historical semantic changes are not random but are influenced by such metaphors, as Mind- As- body. These metaphors, as one type of cognitive structuring, are seen to derive lexical meaning in a motivated way, and provide a key to understanding the creation of polysemy and the phenomenon of semantic shift.

Accordingly, the verb (see) has syntactic shift accompanied by a semantic one, the following patterns explain the point:

Pattern S V

**32-He can see. (S V)**

In this pattern (see) has its principle meaning which is (noticed, or perceive with the eyes).it takes the auxiliaries (can, could).

Pattern S V O

**33-I can't claim the money without seeing the police.**

Alm- Arvius, (1993: 220) states that Miller and Johnson Laird (1976: 584f) assert that (see) is regarded as pragmatically motivated meaning expressions of the principle sense and they base their arguments on the type of the situation that such occurrences tend to represent.

If the verb (see), followed by a complex clause rather than nouns, noun phrase.....etc., the meaning will be (understand) as in:

**34-I see what you mean. (Quirke et al. (1972:96).**

Gruber (1967:938) states that there is a simple preposition (to) on understanding level. It is omitted in the ultimate surface structure for the purpose of transitivity see the example:

**35-Bill could see (to) the tree.**

There are many prepositions like (to) can be acceptable after (see) except the simple preposition (to) itself. This is because by omitting it (the omission is obligatory) we can form the basis of the transitive use of (see)... Thus, the example

**36-Bill could see behind the tree.**

This sentence shows that the complex preposition (behind) appears in the string.

### **Pattern SVOC**

**37-**Some clergymen privately regret the extant of the characters political involvement, but see it as inevitable.

In 37, the verb (see) is complex transitive, which takes an object complement.

Alm– Arvius (1993: 308) states that the meaning of (see) is near- synonym to (judge, consider, or regard). Thus, the predication tells us about one of many conceivable ways of asserting what the object argument stands for.

### **Pattern SVOA**

**38-**May I see you home?

In (38) the verb (see) is a complex transitive verb.

Quirke et al. (1985: 1201) and Alm – Arvius (1993: 190) state that (see) is equivalent to (escort or accompany). Most of the noun phrases that occur in this pattern are restricted with the people.

### **Ambiguity through versatile verbs 1.3**

Some versatile verbs can constitute ambiguity:

Huddleston, (1971: 131- 132) states that the syntax of the verb (call) is quite complex and difficult to handle:

**39-** John called her a cab.

**40-** John called her a stupid / a foll.

**41-** John called her Mary.

**42-** John called her names.

In (39) (call) is ditransitive with (her as recipient). In (40) the clause appears like a construction with consider. It might be object complementation with both verbs; deletion of (be) being optional with (consider), obligatory with (call). It could be used to report John is saying that she was a fool (in the second or third person), or could be used to report that he spoke of her as fool.

In (41) the meaning is (John christened her Mary) or that he addressed her or referred to her a Mary.

In (42) the clause is equivalent to (john insulted her). Here there is no relation of attribution or identity between (names and her).



Another ambiguity can be seen with the verb (get). Notice the following examples:

**43-** John got a new book on linguistics.

Haegeman, (1985:74) mentions that (43) has two analyses, the first interpretation is causative. It implies that John actively went to obtain the book and

Therefore John is the agent in this causative use, thus, John has an agent- relation to (got).

The second analysis is non- causative. The interpretation is that, the book was merely given to him. John is not the agent. (Get) lacks the external thematic role. In other words, the underlying subject or the deep subject is not known. The verb (see) contains an ambiguous meaning in the following clause:

**44-** have you seen him yet?

In (44) the verb (see) has a principle and secondary meaning. The principle is (perceive with eyes), while the second is (meet, visit, or consult). The linguistic context or extra- linguistic circumstances play an important role in specifying the real meaning.

The following clause is ambiguous too:

**45-** She called him her favorite waiter.

Quirk et al., (1985,722) state that (45) belongs to the pattern (SVOC) or, to the pattern (SVOO). The element that follows the object is either object complement, or a direct object preceded by an indirect object.

The following clause has three interpretations or, relationships:

**46-** They called Susan a waitress.

**A:** Direct object + object complement.

They called a waitress for Susan.

**B:** Direct object + object complement.

They said Susan was a waitress.

**C:** Direct object + appositive.

They called Susan, who is/ was a waitress.

With the appositive interpretation, intonation and punctuating marking are obligatory.

## **Conclusion**

Analyzing clauses syntactically and semantically verbs gives the impression that the complementation of the verb restricts the syntax and semantics of that verb. Besides, metaphors, linguistic context, non-linguistic context, intonation, the intended meaning of speaker and type of situations can change the syntactic structure of the verb and its semantic feature.

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