Middle For-Phrases as Low Benefactives

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What are Middle For-Phrases?

(1) a. The bread cut just fine for Bilinda.
   b. Flaming Lips records sell quickly for indie record shops.
   c. That guitar plays well for most people.

- Conflicting syntax of middles in terms of argument structure, agency
- Existing theories assume special operations, mechanisms

Active/unaccusative morphology

- Indo-European, Changana, Quechua, Tarascan (Kemmer 1993)

Adverbs Not Required

(3) a. The program compiled for me.
   b. Good bureaucrats don’t bribe.

Lexical Semantic Theories Undergenerate

(4) a. Your package shipped last night.
   b. My beer poured very smoothly.

- Eventive Middles
- Unergative Middles

Proposal: MFPs are Low Benefactives

Position

(9) Low-merging applicatives, distinct from Affectee applicative (Bowers 2010)
   a. Debbie baked a cake [for Kevin] for Bilinda.
   b. Debbie baked a cake for [Kevin] for Bilinda.

Thematic Role

(10) Interpreted contextually as agentive/benefactive
   a. Kevin sang for me (when I pressured him to).
   b. Kevin sang for me (so I wouldn’t have to).

Productivity

(11) Compatible with unergatives, transitives
   a. The dog sat for Bilinda.
   b. The dog ate the food for Bilinda.
   c. The dog was groomed for Bilinda.
   d. The dog gave Kevin the toy for Bilinda.

Compare to MFPs

(12) Unaccusative + Low Benefactive = Middle
   a. The door opened for Debbie.
   b. *The floor waxed quickly for Kevin for Belinda.

Derivation of a Middle

\[ \theta\text{-roles map to arguments in specifier of argument heads } \theta \text{, interpreted via event-identification to eventuality variable s, following Kratzer (1996).} \]

Designated References