

INF5830 group exercises

Study questions: D. Dowty “Thematic Proto-Roles and Argument Selection”

1. Which two main approaches to semantic roles does the author identify?
2. What are the main goals of the article?
3. Dowty describes a range of problems related to the identification of semantic roles. Pick two of these and summarize his main arguments.
4. What is the focus of Dowty’s own proposal? How does this focus influence his theory of semantic roles?
5. Dowty states that “role types are simply not discrete categories”. What are the consequences of this view?
6. How does Dowty justify the contributing properties for the two proto-roles?
7. How does the Argument Selection Principle (ASP) deal with 3-place predicates? Can you come up with an example?
8. How do the contributing properties (“P-entailments”) correspond to the more traditional role types? Provide examples.
9. What exceptions to the ASP does Dowty identify? Can you expand these verbs into full example sentences and confirm Dowty’s analysis?