

# The Fallacy of the Sleepless vs. Sleepful Dichotomy

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# Introduction



Two issues that keep me sleepless at night:

- **argument–adjunct dichotomy** (AAD) (mainly),
- syntactic and semantic aspects of **coordination** (less so at the moment).

From two perspectives:

- theoretical linguistic (mainly),
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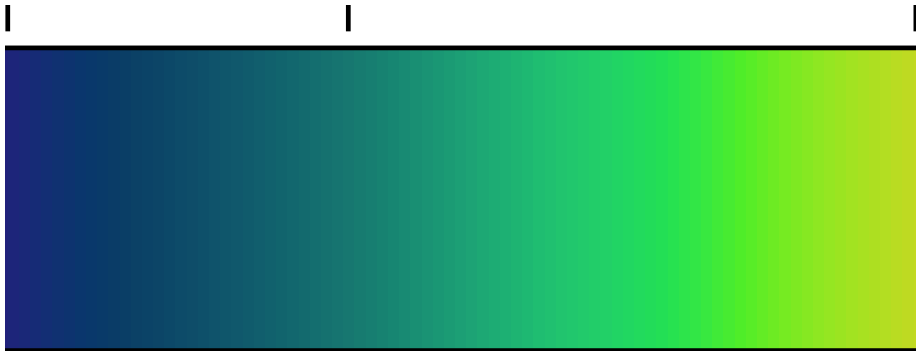
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# Argument–Adjunct Dichotomy?



Is the distinction real or only perceived?

Hypothesis:





# No consistent intuitions or tests 1

## How to distinguish arguments from adjuncts?

- John {read / put} the book **in the attic**.
- John {threw / treated} the book **carelessly**.
- John {slept / spent} **two hours** recovering from the exercise.

Tesnière 1959: three **pairwise incompatible** criteria:

- arguments are often obligatory, adjuncts are always optional,
- nominal phrases are arguments, adverbial phrases are adjuncts,
- arguments denote participants in an event or state, adjuncts refer to its circumstances.

Only **obligatoriness** assumed in contemporary linguistics.



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## Obligatoriness:

- at best a partial test (obligatory → argument),
- not even that, as some prototypical adjuncts are obligatory for pragmatic reasons (Goldberg and Ackerman 2001).

Grimshaw and Vikner 1993:

- #The house was built.
- The house was built...
  - ...yesterday.
  - ...in ten days.
  - ...in a bad part of town.
  - ...only with great difficulty.
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Many other criteria posited in the last 50 years (many quickly discarded, usually pairwise incompatible): extractability, iterability, specificity, *do* *so*...



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## Do so



**Do so test:** verbal proforms such as *do so* must refer to a verb with **all its arguments** (apart from subject) and optionally some adjuncts:

- John ate a banana yesterday, and Geraldine *did so* today.
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**Problem:** known cases where the reference of verbal proforms may omit some arguments (Miller 1992, Culicover and Jackendoff 2005):

- Robin broke the window with a hammer and Mary *did the same* to the vase.
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Tutunjian and Boland 2008: 633: “the sheer number of these tests underlines the fact that **no single test is entirely satisfactory**. Furthermore, when the tests are applied as a group, phrases often yield **contradictory results**, patterning as arguments on some tests and adjuncts on others.”

## Common reactions:

- the distinction is there, we just haven't found good tests yet (after well over 50 years of intensive research, at least since Tesnière 1959 and Chomsky 1965),
- it's an  $n$ -way distinction; usually,  $n = 3$ , but  $n = 6$  in Somers 1984, etc. (i.e. replace 1 ill-defined distinction with  $(n - 1)$  ill-defined distinctions).

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# Grammar and lexicon without AAD?



Przepiórkowski 2016 (HeadLex16 proceedings):

- **LFG does not** crucially rely on AAD,
- it only *assumes* AAD in f-structures;
- getting rid of this assumption;
- still assuming that typical arguments are introduced in the lexicon, and typical adjuncts are introduced via syntactic rules.

My current work – a FrameNet-inspired approach to lexicon where:

- all dependents introduced lexically,
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**Issue:** are there good theoretical and/or computational reasons to keep the AAD around?

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# Grammar and lexicon without AAD?



Przepiórkowski 2016 (HeadLex16 proceedings):

- **LFG does not** crucially rely on AAD,
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# Coordination



## Previous work (with Agnieszka Patejuk – her PhD) on **lexico-semantic coordination**:

- **Why and where did you do that?**
- What and where did Sally eat? (Gračanin-Yuksek 2007)
- Kogo i komu przedstawił? (Patejuk 2015)  
who.ACC and who.DAT introduced  
'Who did he introduce to whom?'
- Obiecać można wszystko i wszystkim.  
promise may everything.ACC and everyone.DAT  
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Comprehensive syntactic analysis in Patejuk 2015, but many **remaining issues**, including:

- what **classes** of phrases (pronominal?, quantificational?, focal?) may occur **in lexico-semantic coordination**?
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**Thank you for your attention!**

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