Unit 5 (a)

Transitivity

Clause as representation – 'construing' experience

Slides for the session of
Exploring English Grammar — the world of clauses
held on
26.xi.2019

Robert Spence
LangSciTech
Saarland University

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3. To learn the number and types of participants that can be involved in these processes in English.

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1. To understand how English 'construes' human experience as a series of 'goings-on'.
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4. To learn an alternative, more general classification of types of participants.

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3. To learn the number and types of participants that can be involved in these processes in English.
4. To learn an alternative, more general classification of types of participants.
5. To learn the types of circumstances that the grammar of English recognizes.

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Grammar as a theory of reality

1. ni–<u>l?θawa</u>–?ko–n–a 'I pull the branch aside'.

Grammar as a theory of reality

1. ni–l̓ʔθawa–ʔko–n–a 'I pull the branch aside'.
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Grammar as a theory of reality

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Grammar as a theory of reality

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2. ni–l?θawa–?ko–θite 'I have an extra toe on my foot'.
3. In Shawnee, these differ only in the suffix(es) at the end.
4. I + forked-outline + tree-like + by-hand-action +
   done-to-something.

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5. I + forked-outline + tree-like + concerning-the-toes.

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5. I + forked-outline + tree-like + concerning-the-toes.
6. English construes these two situations totally differently – it
   doesn't "see" the similarity.

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6. English construes these two situations totally differently – it
   doesn't "see" the similarity.
7. The grammar of a natural human language is a collective,
   unconscious theory of reality.

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6. English construes these two situations totally differently – it doesn't "see" the similarity.
7. The grammar of a natural human language is a collective, unconscious theory of reality.
8. Can some interpretations of reality be 'more successful' than others?

How do English clauses construe human experience?

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How do English clauses construe human experience?

- You're outdoors, and there's motion overhead:

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How do English clauses construe human experience?

- You're outdoors, and there's motion overhead:
- "It's winging!" (cf. English: "It's raining") [0 participants!!]

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How do English clauses construe human experience?

- You're outdoors, and there's motion overhead:
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- English represents experience as a series of 'goings-on' ('something is going on').

How do English clauses construe human experience?

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- Each 'going-on' typically consists of 1 Process + 1–3 Participant(s) + < 7 Circumstance(s).

How do English clauses construe human experience?

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- Process –> verbal group (is winging, is raining, are flying, is dropping).

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- Process –> verbal group (is winging, is raining, are flying, is dropping).
- Participant –> nominal group [typically] (birds, the sky, water; but NOT the "it" in "it's raining").

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- Process –> verbal group (is winging, is raining, are flying, is dropping).
- Participant –> nominal group [typically] (birds, the sky, water; but NOT the "it" in "it's raining").
- Circumstance –> adverbial group or prepositional phrase (in the sky).

Interpersonal and experiential structure compared

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Mood		Residue
Subject	Finite	Predicator

it	is	raining

	Process	

Mood		Residue	
Subject	Finite	Predicator	Adjunct

birds	are	flying	in the sky

Participant	Process		Circumstance

The grammar of experience: types of process in English

- See page 1 of your three-page handout.
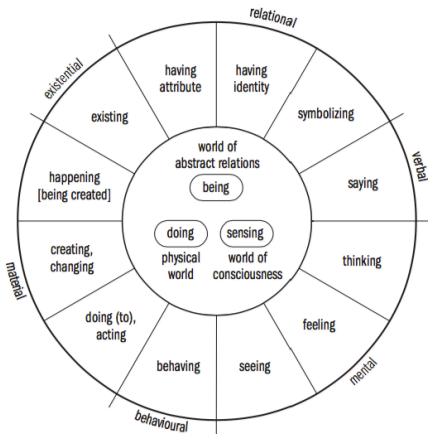
Fig. 5-2   The grammar of experience: types of process in English

The circle of process types

The circle of process types

- Main types of process: doing — sensing — being.

The circle of process types

- Main types of process: doing — sensing — being.
- In-between types of process: behaving — saying — existing.

The circle of process types

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- Main types of process: doing — sensing — being.
- In-between types of process: behaving — saying — existing.
- Together they form a complete circle, with 'existing' flowing into 'happening'.

The circle of process types

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- Main types of process: doing — sensing — being.
- In-between types of process: behaving — saying — existing.
- Together they form a complete circle, with 'existing' flowing into 'happening'.
- Meteorological processes (e.g. "it's raining") are a special subtype of 'happening' material processes.

The system of PROCESS TYPE, with primary participant(s) of each type

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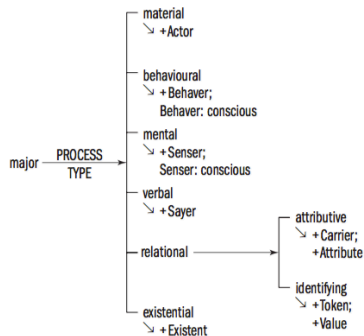
Fig. 5-3   TRANSITIVITY represented as system network

Process types in English are *cryptotypes*

- Process types in English are 'cryptotypes'.

Table 5(8) Unmarked present tense with material and mental processes

	present	present in present
material	[marked] they build a house (for every employee) [habitual; generalized]	[unmarked] they're building a house
mental	[unmarked] I know the city	[marked] I'm knowing the city (for the first time) [inceptive]

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Process types in English are *cryptotypes*

- Process types in English are 'cryptotypes'.
- Cryptotypes are 'covert' semantic categories that have no explicit 'mark' – you can't recognize them. (Is "think" really a mental process? – In a moment we'll find out.)

Table 5(8) Unmarked present tense with material and mental processes

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- Process types in English are 'cryptotypes'.
- Cryptotypes are 'covert' semantic categories that have no explicit 'mark' – you can't recognize them. (Is "think" really a mental process? – In a moment we'll find out.)
- Cryptotypes (like PROCESS TYPE in English) react with 'overt' semantic categories (like TENSE in English) in surprising ways.

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- Cryptotypes (like PROCESS TYPE in English) react with 'overt' semantic categories (like TENSE in English) in surprising ways.
- That's how they exist, and are transmitted to the next generation, and can be discovered and studied (if you dig deeply — even though you're not supposed to).

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General and specific types of participants

General and specific types of participants

- In addition to types of participants that are specific to just one type of process…

General and specific types of participants

- In addition to types of participants that are specific to just one type of process...
- ... there are more general types of participants that can be identified in all types of processes.

General and specific types of participants

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- In addition to types of participants that are specific to just one type of process...
- ... there are more general types of participants that can be identified in all types of processes.
- The more general types of participants are:

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- In addition to types of participants that are specific to just one type of process…
- … there are more general types of participants that can be identified in all types of processes.
- The more general types of participants are:
- Medium (the 'affected' participant, the one most centrally involved)

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- In addition to types of participants that are specific to just one type of process...
- ... there are more general types of participants that can be identified in all types of processes.
- The more general types of participants are:
- Medium (the 'affected' participant, the one most centrally involved)
- Agent (the external 'cause' of the process)

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- In addition to types of participants that are specific to just one type of process...

- ... there are more general types of participants that can be identified in all types of processes.

- The more general types of participants are:

- Medium (the 'affected' participant, the one most centrally involved)

- Agent (the external 'cause' of the process)

- Beneficiary (the participant who benefits from the process)

General and specific types of participants

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- The more general types of participants are:
- Medium (the 'affected' participant, the one most centrally involved)
- Agent (the external 'cause' of the process)
- Beneficiary (the participant who benefits from the process)
- Range (the 'unaffected' participant)

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- Medium (the 'affected' participant, the one most centrally involved)
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- Beneficiary (the participant who benefits from the process)
- Range (the 'unaffected' participant)
- We'll use *both* groups of labels (e.g. both 'Actor' and 'Agent').

Transitive vs. ergative interpretations of processes

Transitive vs. ergative interpretations of processes

- In a **transitive** interpretation of a material process, someone 'acts'.

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Transitive vs. ergative interpretations of processes

- In a **transitive** interpretation of a material process, someone 'acts'.

- Either that's that ('intransitive'), or else the action 'goes through', 'goes across' ('transitive') and impacts on another participant (the Goal).

Transitive vs. ergative interpretations of processes

- In a **transitive** interpretation of a material process, someone 'acts'.

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- This is a 'linear-mechanical' theory of reality.

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- In an **ergative** interpretation of any process, the process manifests itself "in the medium of" someone or something: "My pocket tore!" (the tearing happened in the cloth of the pocket).

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- In an **ergative** interpretation of any process, the process manifests itself "in the medium of" someone or something: "My pocket tore!" (the tearing happened in the cloth of the pocket).

- Either that's that ('middle'), or else the process was brought about by an external agent ('effective'): "That hook tore my pocket!"

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- Either that's that ('middle'), or else the process was brought about by an external agent ('effective'): "That hook tore my pocket!"

- This is a 'technological-magical' theory of reality.

- English uses both theories in modelling processes, so we'll use both (more specific) **transitive** labelling (Actor, Goal, Recipient; Senser, Phenomenon; etc.) and (more general) **ergative** labelling (Medium, Agent, Beneficiary, Range).

Transitive and ergative participant labelling

Table 5(41) Table of transitivity functions, showing transitive and ergative equivalents (participant functions only)

	Typical preposition	Ergative function	Transitive function						
			material	behavioural	mental	verbal	relational: attributive	relational: identifying	existential
process	–	1 Process							
participants		2 Medium	Actor [mid.]; Actor or Goal [eff.]	Behaver	Senser	Sayer [mid.]; Target [eff.]	Carrier	Token	Existent
	by	3 Agent	Initiator or Actor [eff.]	–	Phenomenon ['please']	Sayer [eff.]	Attributor	Assigner	–
	to, for	4 Beneficiary	Recipient; Client	–	–	Receiver	(Beneficiary)		–
	at, on, &c.	5 Range	Scope	Behaviour	Phenomenon ['like']	Verbiage	Attribute	Value	
circum-stances	for; over, across, &c.	6 Extent	duration, frequency (temporal), distance (spatial)				how long? how far? how often?		
	at, in, on, from, &c.	7 Location	time (temporal), place (spatial)				when? where?		
	with, by, like	8 Manner	means, quality, comparison, degree				how? what with? in what way? like what? to what extent?		
	through, for, &c.	9 Cause	reason, purpose, behalf				why? what for? who for?		
	in case of, &c.	10 Contin-gency	condition, concession, default				under what conditions?		
	with, besides, &c.	11 Accom-paniment	comitation, addition				who/what with? who/what else?		
	as, into, &c.	12 Role	guise, product				what as? what into?		

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process	–	1 Process							
participants		2 Medium	Actor [mid.]; Actor or Goal [eff.]	Behaver	Senser	Sayer [mid.]; Target [eff.]	Carrier	Token	Existent
	by	3 Agent	Initiator or Actor [eff.]	–	Phenomenon ['please']	Sayer [eff.]	Attributor	Assigner	–
	to, for	4 Beneficiary	Recipient; Client	–	–	Receiver	(Beneficiary)		–
	at, on, &c.	5 Range	Scope	Behaviour	Phenomenon ['like']	Verbiage	Attribute	Value	–
circum-stances	for; over, across, &c.	6 Extent	duration, frequency (temporal), distance (spatial)				how long? how far? how often?		
	at, in, on, from, &c.	7 Location	time (temporal), place (spatial)				when? where?		
	with, by, like	8 Manner	means, quality, comparison, degree				how? what with? in what way? like what? to what extent?		
	through, for, &c.	9 Cause	reason, purpose, behalf				why? what for? who for?		
	in case of, &c.	10 Contin-gency	condition, concession, default				under what conditions?		
	with, besides, &c.	11 Accom-paniment	comitation, addition				who/what with? who/what else?		
	as, into, &c.	12 Role	guise, product				what as? what into?		

Transitivity/ergativity produces nuclear, not linear structures (1)

- See page 2 of your three-page handout.
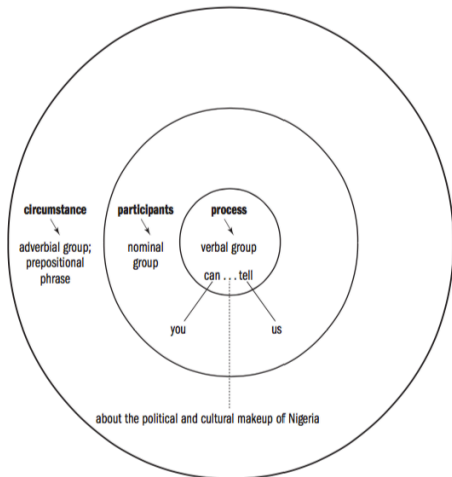
Fig. 5-4   Central and peripheral elements in the experiential structure of the clause

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5 (a).13

Transitivity/ergativity produces nuclear, not linear structures (2)

- See page 3 of your three-page handout.
- Medium and Process are very closely related (lexical collocation!!)
- Agent is like Manner, Beneficiary is like Cause, Range is like Extent.
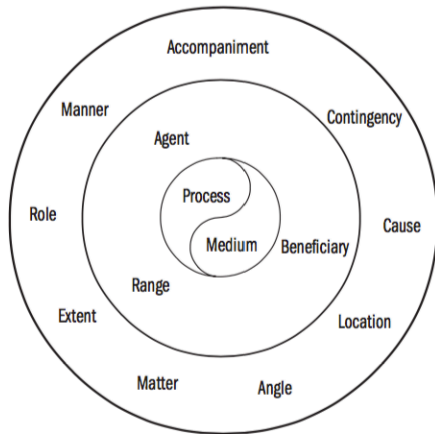
Fig. 5-38   Clause nucleus of Process + Medium, inner ring of Agent, Beneficiary and Range and outer ring of circumstances

Transitivity/ergativity produces nuclear, not linear structures (3)

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- See page 3 of your three-page handout.
- Agent, Beneficiary, and Range can be expressed as prepositional phrases.

Table 5(44) Association of prepositional phrase with textual prominence

	non-prominent	marked Theme	'late news'
Agent (her nephew)	her nephew sent her flowers	by her nephew she was sent flowers	she was sent flowers by her nephew
Beneficiary (his aunt)	he sent his aunt flowers	to his aunt he sent flowers	he sent flowers to his aunt
Range (the high jump)	John wins the high jump every time	at the high jump John wins every time	John wins every time at the high jump

There are grammatical criteria for distinguishing process types

Table 5(45) Criteria for distinguishing process types

	material	behav.	mental	verbal	relational attributive	relational identifying	existential
Category meaning:	doing (doing, happening, doing to/with)	behaving	sensing	saying	being (attribute)	being (identity)	being (existence)
Number of inherent participants:	1 or 2	1	2	1	1	2	1 or 0
Nature of first participant:	thing	conscious thing	conscious thing	symbol source	thing or fact	thing or fact	thing or fact
Nature of second participant:	thing		thing or fact			[same as 1st]	
Ability to project:	–	–	projection of ideas	projection of locations	–	–	–
Directionality:	one way	one way	two way: phase type / like type	one way	one way	one way	one way
Voice:	middle or effective	middle	effective	middle	middle or effective (target type)	middle or effective	middle
Type of receptive:	receptive	receptive	receptive	medio-receptive		receptive	
Pro-verb:	do / do to/with	do	do	(do to)			
Unmarked present tense:	present in present	present in present	simple present	simple present	simple present	simple present	simple present
Accentuation of verb:	accented	accented	accented	(either)	(either)	unaccented	unaccented / unaccented

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5 (a).16

There are grammatical criteria for distinguishing process types

- See page 3 of your three-page handout.

Table 5(45) Criteria for distinguishing process types

	material		behav.	mental		verbal	relational attributive	relational identifying	existential
Category meaning:	doing (doing, happening, doing to/with)		behaving	sensing		saying	being (attribute)	being (identity)	being (existence)
Number of inherent participants:	1 or 2		1	2		1	1	2	1 or 0
Nature of first participant:	thing		conscious thing	conscious thing		symbol source	thing or fact	thing or fact	thing or fact
Nature of second participant:	thing			thing or fact				[same as 1st]	
Ability to project:	–		–	projection of ideas		projection of locations	–	–	–
Directionality:	one way		one way	two way: phase type	like type	one way	one way	one way	one way
Voice:	middle or effective		middle	effective	middle	middle or effective (target type)	middle or effective	middle or effective	middle
Type of receptive:		receptive		receptive	medio-receptive			receptive	
Pro-verb:	do	do to/with	do	(do to)					
Unmarked present tense:	present in present		present in present	simple present		simple present	simple present	simple present	simple present
Accentuation of verb:	accented		accented	accented	(either)	(either)	unaccented	unaccented	unaccented

There are grammatical criteria for distinguishing process types

- See page 3 of your three-page handout.
- What are you doing ('right now')? (present-in-present tense → material process)

Table 5(45) Criteria for distinguishing process types

	material		behav.	mental	verbal	relational		existential
						attributive	identifying	
Category meaning:	doing (doing, happening, doing to/with)		behaving	sensing	saying	being (attribute)	being (identity)	being (existence)
Number of inherent participants:	1 or 2		1	2	1	1	2	1 or 0
Nature of first participant:	thing		conscious thing	conscious thing	symbol source	thing or fact	thing or fact	thing or fact
Nature of second participant:	thing			thing or fact			[same as 1st]	
Ability to project:	–		–	projection of ideas	projection of locutions	–	–	–
Directionality:	one way		one way	two way; phase type / like type	one way	one way	one way	one way
Voice:	middle or effective		middle	effective / middle	middle or effective (target type)	middle or effective	middle or effective	middle
Type of receptive:		receptive		receptive	medio-receptive		receptive	
Pro-verb:	do	do to/with	do	(do to)				
Unmarked present tense:	present in present		present in present	simple present	simple present	simple present	simple present	simple present
Accentuation of verb:	accented		accented	accented / (either)	(either)	unaccented	unaccented	unaccented

There are grammatical criteria for distinguishing process types

- See page 3 of your three-page handout.
- What are you doing ('right now')? (present-in-present tense → material process)
- Quiet! I'm thinking! (present-in-present tense → material (or behavioural?))

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5 (a).16

Table 5(45) Criteria for distinguishing process types

	material		behav.	mental		verbal	relational		existential
							attributive	identifying	
Category meaning:	doing (doing, happening, doing to/with)		behaving	sensing		saying	being (attribute)	being (identity)	being (existence)
Number of inherent participants:	1 or 2		1	2		1	1	2	1 or 0
Nature of first participant:	thing		conscious thing	conscious thing		symbol source	thing or fact	thing or fact	thing or fact
Nature of second participant:	thing			thing or fact				[same as 1st]	
Ability to project:	–		–	projection of ideas		projection of locutions	–	–	–
Directionality:	one way		one way	two way; phase type	like type	one way	one way	one way	one way
Voice:	middle or effective		middle	effective	middle	middle or effective (target type)	middle or effective	middle or effective	middle
Type of receptive:		receptive		receptive	medio-receptive			receptive	
Pro-verb:	do	do to/with	do	(do to)					
Unmarked present tense:	present in present		present in present	simple present		simple present	simple present	simple present	simple present
Accentuation of verb:	accented		accented	accented	(either)	(either)	unaccented	unaccented	unaccented

There are grammatical criteria for distinguishing process types

- See page 3 of your three-page handout.
- What are you doing ('right now')? (present-in-present tense → material process)
- Quiet! I'm thinking! (present-in-present tense → material (or behavioural?))
- What do you think ('right now')? (simple present tense → mental process)

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Table 5(45) Criteria for distinguishing process types

	material		behav.	mental	verbal	relational		existential
						attributive	identifying	
Category meaning:	doing (doing, happening, doing to/with)		behaving	sensing	saying	being (attribute)	being (identity)	being (existence)
Number of inherent participants:	1 or 2		1	2	1	1	2	1 or 0
Nature of first participant:	thing		conscious thing	conscious thing	symbol source	thing or fact	thing or fact	thing or fact
Nature of second participant:	thing			thing or fact			[same as 1st]	
Ability to project:	–		–	projection of ideas	projection of locations	–	–	–
Directionality:	one way		one way	two way; phase type	like type	one way	one way	one way	one way
Voice:	middle or effective		middle	effective	middle	middle or effective (target type)	middle or effective	middle or effective	middle
Type of receptive:		receptive		receptive	medio-receptive			receptive	
Pro-verb:	do	do to/with	do	(do to)					
Unmarked present tense:	present in present		present in present	simple present		simple present	simple present	simple present	simple present
Accentuation of verb:	accented		accented	accented	(either)	(either)	unaccented	unaccented	unaccented

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There are grammatical criteria for distinguishing process types

- See page 3 of your three-page handout.
- What are you doing ('right now')? (present-in-present tense → material process)
- Quiet! I'm thinking! (present-in-present tense → material (or behavioural?))
- What do you think ('right now')? (simple present tense → mental process)
- I think it's a good idea. (projects a proposition as a 'that'-clause in a 'Denkblase' → mental process)

Table 5(45) Criteria for distinguishing process types

	material		behav.	mental	verbal	relational attributive	relational identifying	existential
Category meaning:	doing (doing, happening, doing to/with)		behaving	sensing	saying	being (attribute)	being (identity)	being (existence)
Number of inherent participants:	1 or 2		1	2	1	1	2	1 or 0
Nature of first participant:	thing		conscious thing	conscious thing	symbol source	thing or fact	thing or fact	thing or fact
Nature of second participant:	thing			thing or fact			[same as 1st]	
Ability to project:	–		–	projection of ideas	projection of locutions			
Directionality:	one way		one way	two way: phase type	like type	one way	one way	one way
Voice:	middle or effective		middle	effective	middle	middle or effective (target type)	middle or effective	middle
Type of receptive:		receptive		receptive	medio-receptive		receptive	
Pro-verb:	do	do to/with	do	(do to)				
Unmarked present tense:	present in present		present in present	simple present	simple present	simple present	simple present	simple present
Accentuation of verb:	accented		accented	accented	(either)	(either)	unaccented	unaccented

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There are grammatical criteria for distinguishing process types

- See page 3 of your three-page handout.
- What are you doing ('right now')? (present-in-present tense → material process)
- Quiet! I'm thinking! (present-in-present tense → material (or behavioural?))
- What do you think ('right now')? (simple present tense → mental process)
- I think it's a good idea. (projects a proposition as a 'that'-clause in a 'Denkblase' → mental process)
- It's not JUST a question of what you think a clause means… you need firm grammatical evidence!

Table 5(45) Criteria for distinguishing process types

	material		behav.	mental		verbal	relational		existential
							attributive	identifying	
Category meaning:	doing (doing, happening, doing to/with)		behaving	sensing		saying	being (attribute)	being (identity)	being (existence)
Number of inherent participants:	1 or 2		1	2		1	1	2	1 or 0
Nature of first participant:	thing		conscious thing	conscious thing		symbol source	thing or fact	thing or fact	thing or fact
Nature of second participant:	thing			thing or fact				[same as 1st]	
Ability to project:	–		–	projection of ideas		projection of locations	–	–	–
Directionality:	one way		one way	two way: phase type	like type	one way	one way	one way	one way
Voice:	middle or effective		middle	effective	middle	middle or effective (target type)	middle or effective	middle or effective	middle
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Pro-verb:	do	do to/with	do	(do to)					
Unmarked present tense:	present in present		present in present	simple present		simple present	simple present	simple present	simple present
Accentuation of verb:	accented		accented	accented	(either)	(either)	unaccented	unaccented	unaccented

Exercise

- We're going to try to find function labels for the components of the clauses in your twelve-page handout.

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Homework

- We're going to try to find function labels for the components of the clauses in your twelve-page handout.

- In the process, we'll learn something about the different kinds of processes that the grammar of English recognizes.

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Exercise

Homework

- We're going to try to find function labels for the components of the clauses in your twelve-page handout.
- In the process, we'll learn something about the different kinds of processes that the grammar of English recognizes.
- We'll try to get as far as mental and maybe even verbal processes.

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Homework

- Your homework for next week is to go through the six-page handout again.
  In case you missed the class, that handout is also available here: `http://www.spence.saar.de/courses/grammar/questions05a/index.pdf`

- The three-page handout is available here: `http://www.spence.saar.de/courses/grammar/unit05a/handout_5a.pdf`

Acknowledgements, further reading, other sources

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Most of the ideas presented here come from M.A.K. Halliday, *An
Introduction to Functional Grammar*, 2nd edition 1994 ("IFG2") or 3rd
edition 2004 ("IFG3").
Further reading: IFG2, chapter 5; or IFG3, chapter 5.
See also: Annabelle Lukin's "prezi" slides on Clause as representation
(on Vimeo):
https://vimeo.com/album/2028694/video/48590461 (PART 1)
https://vimeo.com/album/2028694/video/49338877 (PART 2)