

Lexical organization

Consider the verb *put*, for which a partial lexical entry is shown in Figure 1.

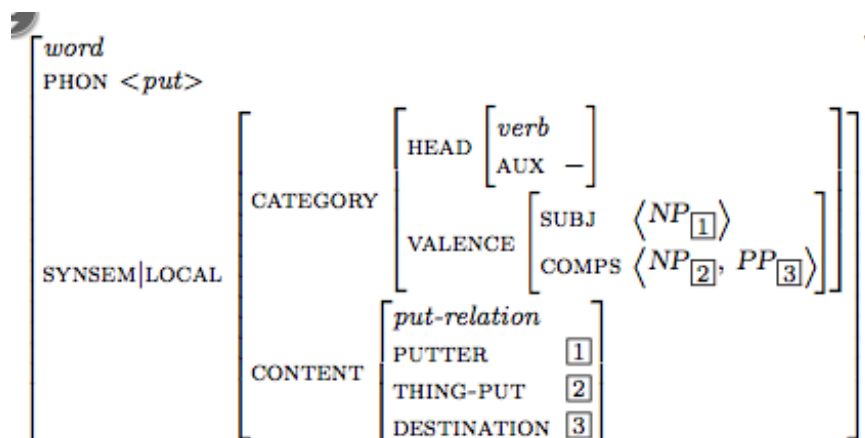


Figure 1: A basic lexical entry

As specified by the type in the top-left corner, this Attribute-Value Matrix (AVM) describes objects of type *word*. The phon attribute here is simply taken to be a list of strings serving as a placeholder for an actual phonological representation for HPSG. The morpho-syntactic information which characterizes local properties of linguistic expressions are specified under the category feature which, along with the semantic content, are identified by the local part of the synsem value. The subset of category properties which are necessarily shared between mother and head daughter in a local tree are packaged together under the head feature.

The valence feature specifies the combinatory potential of lexical items as lists of synsem objects (as opposed to lists of signs). Thus neither phonological information (specified in phon), nor the daughters feature, which we will see as encoding constituent structure in objects of type *phrase*, can be selected for, incorporating the well-supported generalization that syntactic selection is independent of phonological form and is consistently local.

The specification of the valence features (subj and comps) and cont, specifying the semantic roles assigned by the head, make it possible to lexically associate the valents of a head with the semantic contribution of these valents to the relation it denotes. The boxed numbers indicate token-identity of the values specified. Instead of specifying such linking in each lexical entry, it can be derived from general linking principles, and references therein). The issue of lexical generalizations brings us to the question how the lexicon is defined.

The basic lexicon of an HPSG theory can be defined by the Word Principle shown in Figure 2, where each Lexical-Entry is a description of the kind we saw in (1).

$$\text{word} \rightarrow \text{Lexical-Entry}_1 \vee \text{Lexical-Entry}_2 \vee \dots \vee \text{Lexical-Entry}_n$$

Figure 2: The Word Principle