13. Conclusion

Briefly, I have argued in this paper that:

1. Total indexing of verbal arguments by thematic role type is almost always excessive.
2. The domain of argument selection (specifically, the selection of a single verb among apparently synonymous ones) does not require role distinctions at all.
3. If we recognize the new kind of “role” that I call incremental theme, then the contrast in 3. that strategy suggests we should recognize a new kind of “role” (i.e., an incremental theme).

5. For the domain of argument selection, the best theory of roles is one in which role-types are not discrete; rather, a hierarchy of roles is recognized, then it turns out that an opposition between only two roles is needed: these are called Proto-Agent and Proto-Patient.

7. “Thematic Role Hierarchies” and “Transitivity” are best characterized in terms of the numbers of P-Agent and/or P-Patient entailments, and with this kind of definition, the “same” verb is used with different argument configurations to distinguish the two meanings (kiss-cases, psych-movement cases, spray-load cases), the differentiation between the two meanings obeying the Argument-Selection principles for the contrasting roles.

8. One consequence of this kind of description is that oppositions between only two roles can explain why and how languages make such a distinction without recourse to an “unaccusative advancement” analysis.