

# The Syntactic and Semantic Interface of English Cut Verbs

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**Presentado por Haidee Mora Padilla**

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Tutor: M<sup>a</sup> Auxiliadora Martín Díaz

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## 1. ABSTRACT

This work focuses on analyzing a group of verbs classified by Levin (1993) as *cut* verbs (as opposed to the so called *carve* verbs). This analysis will be divided into three main points:

First, I will lay out some discrepancies with Levin's classification for Verbs of Cutting, which will be discussed not only from a syntagmatic point of view, comparing and arguing whether the placement of the verbs within the different subdomains of *carve* and *cut* verbs is the correct one or not, but also from a paradigmatic perspective, by examining the semantic differences of some of the verbs that Levin (1993) includes in the subdomain of Cut Verbs.

Secondly, I will highlight some of the contributions provided by Faber & Mairal (2003) to such domain and I will compare them with the classification presented by Levin. In their work these authors provide five new verbs, which have not been classified by Levin within the lexical domain of Verbs of cutting, but however they share some of its most important features.

In the third place a proposal will be presented. Where a re-ascription of some verbal predicates listed by Levin (1993) as cut-verbs will be offered. This new organization/structure will be paradigmatically and syntagmatically justified.

Key Words: Cut verbs, conative construction, middle construction, Subject Instrument construction and resultative phrase.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this paper is to analyze a group of verbs classified as "cutting verbs", using as points of reference Levin's (1993) verbal class classification, Faber and Mairal's (1999,2003) approach, and the Framenet Project (<https://framenet.icsi.berkeley.edu>).

I have decided to use Levin (1993) because it is a study that analyses the syntagmatic and semantic features of the English verbs. This author emphasizes that verbs are "argument-taking elements" that present certain properties which dictate their behavior, and demonstrates how alternations in the expression of arguments may involve a change in meaning. Her classification is organized in what she calls *Verb Classes*, where she gathers groups of verbs whose behavior is very much alike.

Faber and Mairal (1999) have been also selected as reference sources because they establish a verbal classification of lexical domains based on definitional analysis, in which the verbs that have in common the same *genus* are part of the lexical domain. In a further study, Faber and Mairal (2003), these authors present a new model, a lexical classification that combines both syntactic and semantic information in one representation.

The Framenet Project , in turn, classifies the words in *semantic frames*, showing the relation between the components of the structure and also giving a description of the sort of event that is taking place. For this reason this Project constitutes a good reference point to contrast the outcome of the present study

As a result of my analysis some discrepancies, having to do with the number of verbal predicates associated to the subdomain, as well as to their syntactic behavior, and some contributions to Levin (1993) approach will be presented.

### 3. THEORETICAL APPROACHES AND METHODOLOGY

This work carries out an analysis on a group of verbs classified as "cutting verbs", following Levin's *Verb Classes and Alternations, A Preliminary Investigation* (1993), Faber and Mairal's *Construction a lexicon of English Verbs*(1999) and Faber and Mairal's further research *Representación Léxica y Esquemas Léxicos* (2003).

#### 3.1. Beth Levin's classification:

Levin (1993) analyses the syntactic and semantic features of the English Verbs. She focuses specifically on the study of verbs, due to their lexical and syntactic importance. Her work "is guided by the assumption that the behavior of a verb, particularly with respect to the expression and interpretation of its arguments, is to a large extent determined by its meaning" (Levin, 1993, p.1)

Levin's (1993) investigation is divided in two different parts:

"Part I of the book sets out a range of diathesis alternations that are relevant to a speaker's lexical knowledge of English. Part II presents a large number of semantically coherent classes of verbs whose members pattern in the same way with respect to diathesis alternations and other properties. The classes that are identified in Part II of the book have emerged from the study of the diathesis alternations set out in Part I." (Levin, 1993, p.17)

According to Levin (1993) verbs are "argument-taking elements" that display a complex set of properties which dictate their behavior. Therefore, alternations in the expression of such arguments may involve a change in meaning. Which means that verbs are modified by the arguments that they are surrounded by.

For that reason, knowing the meaning of a verb is what helps us ascertain its behavior. So verbs that share a syntactic behavior, also share components of their meaning. Levin emphasizes that due to their polysemic nature most verbs are "cross-listed" and may appear in more than one scheme presented in Part II of the book. (Levin, 1993, p.18)

Levin's "verb class" classification is the result of joining together group of verbs that share some components of their meaning and whose behavior is very much alike.

As I mentioned earlier, this paper will focus solely on "verbs of cutting" which Levin divides in two sub-classes "Cut Verbs" and "Carve Verbs".

## "21 Verbs of Cutting

### 21.1: Cut Verbs

Class Members: chip, clip, cut, hack, hew, saw, scrape, scratch, slash, snip.

### 21.2: Carve Verbs

Class Members: bore, bruise, carve, chip, chop, crop, crush, cube, dent, dice, drill, file, fillet, gash, gouge, grate, grind, mangle, mash, mince, mow, nick, notch, perforate, prune, pulverize, punch, shred, slice, slit, spear, squash, squish." (Levin, 1993, p.156)

The main reason of this division is that the members of the "Cut Verbs" participate in the conative alternation, while the members of the "Carve Verbs" do not.

The conative alternation implies both contact and motion. This is an alternation of transitivity, wherein the object of the transitive verbal predicate becomes the a constituent of a prepositional phrase started by the preposition *at* in an intransitive variant. The use of the conative alternation defines an "attempted" goal without making clear whether it was achieved or not. (Levin, 1993, p.42)

- (1) a. Carol cut the bread.  
b. Carol cut at the bread.
  
- (2) a. Carol carved the stone.  
b. \*Carol carved at the stone.

The first couple of sentences show a clear example of "conative alternation" where the object of the verb *cut* in the transitive variant (a) becomes the object of the preposition *at* in the prepositional phrase of the intransitive variant (b). Moreover, in sentence (a) Carol has finished the action of cutting the bread, whereas in (b) it is not clear whether the action has been completed or not. These examples also show how the sentences experience variations in meaning due to the "diathesis alternation". However, as shown in the example (2), this alternation does not work with the verb *carve*.

### 3.2. Pamela Faber and Ricardo Mairal's approach:

In Pamela Faber and Ricardo Mairal's work *Constructing a Lexicon of English Verbs*, they establish a verbal classification on lexical domains following the Functional-Lexematic Model.

The lexical organization and the Functional-Lexematic Model are based on fundamental linguistic models like: *Cognitive Linguistics*, *Generative Linguistics*, *Pustejovsky's Generative Lexicon*, *Fillmore's Frame Semantics*, *Wordnet*, *Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM)* and *Meaning Text Theory and the Combinational Explanatory Dictionary*.

In order to understand their classification it is very important to clarify the following concepts:

**Semantic field:** (central to their analysis, since it is the concept on which the idea of lexical domain is based) They describe the *semantic field* "as a set of lexemes which cover a certain conceptual area and which bear certain specifiable semantic relations to one another" (Faber and Mairal, 1999, p. 67)

**Genus and Differentia:** These two types of definition are related, as they define the meaning of a word through its connections with other words. Riemer (2010) asserts that "According to Aristotle, definition involves specifying the broader class to which the definiendum<sup>1</sup> belongs (often called the definiendum's *genus*), and then showing the distinguishing feature of the definiendum (the *differentia*) which distinguishes it from the other members of this broader class". This means that *genus* is the generic definition, while *differentia* are the specific characteristics that mark the difference between the members of a given class. Levin (1991) uses verbs of sound as an example and says that "the genus is 'emit a sound' and differentiae describes the type of sound produced (low, high, loud...)"

**Seme:** A minimal semantic feature, that is to say a distinctive component of meaning, that allows to differentiate one lexical unit from another.

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<sup>1</sup> A word, phrase, or symbol which is the subject of a definition, especially in a dictionary entry, or which is introduced into a logical system by being defined. (Oxford dictionaries)

**Sememe:** It is the group of *semes* (semantic features) that make up the definition of a lexical unit.

**Archisememe:** It is the set of *semes* (semantic features) shared by various *sememes*.

**Superordinate:** A word whose meaning includes the meaning of one or more other words. E.g. *vehicle* is the superordinate of words such as *car* and *truck*.

**Hypernym:** It also refers to a word whose meaning includes the meanings of other words. For example, the verb *cook* is a *hypernym* of the verbs *fry* and *bake*.

**Hyponyms:** It is a lexical unit containing specific semantic features that make them different from the *hypernym* and the other members of their class. For instance, the verbs *fry* and *bake* are *hyponyms* of the verb *cook*.

**Co-hyponym:** Words that are hyponyms to the same hypernym (superordinate term). E.g. *fry* and *bake* are co-hyponyms to each other.

Faber and Mairal's lexical organization is based on definitional analysis. Those verbs whose definitions share the same *genus* are part of the same lexical domain or subdomain. They postulate a lexical inheritance system in which meaning constituents of verbs and their syntactic behavior are inherited from their superordinate. "FLM lexical architecture is determined by working upward from words, not downward from concepts." (Faber and Mairal, 1999, p. 84)

A research entitled "Representación léxica y esquemas léxicos", Faber and Mairal present a new model of lexical representation, halfway between the already existing models, which are focused solely on a syntactic representation, or purely on a semantic representation. They propose "a lexicon conceived as a set of semantic classes hinged together." (Faber and Mairal, 2003, p. 35)

As an example of such lexical representation, they place *cutting verbs* in the lexical domain of ACTION. Being *Cut* the superordinate verb or the more generic one (the hypernym) which contains the hyponyms to be found in the list below. (Faber and Mairal, 2003, p. 38)



- CUT** to make an opening/wound/mark in sth//sb with a sharp-edged tool.
- hew** to CUT a large piece out of a rock, stone or another hard material in a rough way, usu. with difficulty.
- prune** to CUT off branches from trees/bushes/plants that they will grow better in the future.
- shave** to CUT off hair from the face/body-part very close to the skin with a razor/shaver.
- gash** to make a long, deep CUT in the skin. <body-part>
- nick** to make a small, shallow CUT in sth, usu. accidentally.
- slash** to CUT sth with a sharp-edged tool with a quick, strong swinging movement (a long, deep, cut.)
- lop** to CUT sth from what it was attached to with quick, strong stroke.
- slice** to CUT sth into thin, flat pieces.
- chop** to CUT sth into pieces by repeatedly hitting it with a sharp-edged tool (axe, knife, etc.).
- hack** to CUT sth into uneven pieces in a rough, violent way.
- whittle** to CUT sth (wood) to a smaller size by removing small, thin pieces.
- chisel** to CUT sth (stone/wood/metal) into a special shape as if with a chisel.
- carve** to CUT wood/stone into a special shape.
- saw** to CUT sth (branch/tree) with a saw.
- clip** to CUT a piece/s from sth with scissors or another sharp-edged tool to make them shorter/neater.
- snip** to CUT sth as if with scissors with short, quick movements.
- shear** to CUT sth (wool/hair) off (as if) with shears.
- mow** to CUT sth (grass, plant with long stems, what grows in a field, etc.), using a machine/scythe. (Faber and Mairal, 2003, p. 38)

Therefore we can say that the "genus" is the meaning of cut, because it is, in turn, the more generic meaning, and the one that the rest of the hyponyms of CUT share. Being the "differentia" the component of their meanings which make the verbs differ from each other. Such as, the manner, the instrument, etc.

Although both analysis, the former by Beth Levin and the latest one by Faber and Mairal, bear many similarities in their classification, they also differ in some points, which will be discussed later in this paper.

### 3.3. FrameNet

The so called Framenet Project has been developed at the International Computer Science Institute in Berkeley and it has been working since 1997. It is a lexical database that contains more than 10,000 word senses, which come with annotated examples that show their meaning and usage. As such it has been also used in the development of the present research.

"FrameNet is based on a theory of meaning called **Frame Semantics**."<sup>2</sup> The main idea of the Framenet project is to locate the words in a *semantic frame*, so they are best understood. The semantic frame shows the relation between the components of the structure and also gives a description of the type of event that is taking place<sup>3</sup>.

The concept of cooking is one of the best and most cited examples that show how this project works. Such concept includes: The person that cooks (Cook), the food that is going to be cooked (Food), something to hold the food while cooking (Container) and a source of heat (Heating\_instrument). The frame which the verbs of cooking belong to is called *Apply\_Heat*, and the elements involved in this event cook (Food, Heating-instrument and Container) are called frame elements (FEs). All the verbs that are related to this frame, such as *fry*, *bake*, *boil*, etc. are called lexical units (LUs) of the frame<sup>4</sup>.

In the following sections, the frame of *cutting*, to which the Verbs of Cutting in Levin's (1993) classification belong, will be analyzed for a better understanding of this research.

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<sup>2</sup> See (<https://framenet.icsi.berkeley.edu/fndrupal/about>)

<sup>3</sup> See ("About Framenet", n.d)

<sup>4</sup> See ("About Framenet", n.d)

#### 4. THE SCOPE OF ANALYSIS OF THE SUBDOMAIN OF CUT VEBS

##### 4.1. Paradigmatic axis

As mentioned above, the verbs that I will analyze in this paper are part of the lexical frame/domain of *cutting*. Within this semantic frame we find verbs like *carve*, *chop*, *cube*, *cut*, *dice*, *fillet*, *mince*, *pare*, *slice*. The lexical relationship between verbs that belong to the same lexical domain is a hypernym/hyponym relationship.

In the case of *Verbs of cutting*, the verb *cut* functions as the hypernym of this domain, because, as we can see in the example shown in the table below, its meaning is the *archisememe*, which means that it is the most generic meaning shared by all other components, and at the same time, turning the *cut* into the archilexeme of this lexical domain.

**Semes**

	to make an opening/wound/mark in sth//sb with sharp edged tool	out of a rock, or stone or another hard material	Branches from trees/bushes/plants	Th e skin	Hair from face/body-part	somethi ng	Woo d	A piece of somethi ng
Cut	+							
Hew	+	+	-	-	-	-	+	+
Slash	+	-	-	-	-	+	+	-
Hack	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	-
Saw	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-
Clip	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	+
scratc h	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	-

Table 1 (The complete table is attached at the end)

Archisememe Sememe

Therefore, all other verbs are hyponyms of the verb *cut*, since the meaning of *cut* happens to be implicit in the meaning of the rest of the verbs belonging to this lexical domain, as shown in the next example:

**CUT** (to make an opening/wound/mark in sth//sb with a sharp-edged tool.(archisememe)

**hew** to **CUT** a large piece out of a rock, stone or another hard material in a rough way, usu. with difficulty.

**prune** to **CUT** off branches from trees/bushes/plants that they will grow better in the future.

**shave** to **CUT** off hair from the face/body-part very close to the skin with a razor/shaver.

**gash** to make a long, deep **CUT** in the skin. <body-part>.

**nick** to make a small, shallow **CUT** in sth, usu. accidentally.

*Hew, prune, shave, gash* and *nick* are hyponyms of *cut*, as well as co-hyponyms between them.

#### 4.2. Syntagmatic axis

In order to do this, I started studying the combinatory properties of the predicate, which helped me to establish its valency, that is, the number of arguments a verb can take. Consequently I used two different corpora British National Corpus (henceforth BNC) and Corpus of Contemporary American English (henceforth COCA) .

For most verbs belonging to this domain, their valency is 2, meaning they are two-argument verbs. For instance, in the case of *cut* it could be that "somebody cuts something" o "something cuts something".

(3) FU6      I cut my fingernails all the time.

(4) HTM      The knife cut its throat.

However, in the intransitive variant some of these verbs can have a valency 1. That is, they only take one arguments, they are one-argument verbs. For instance: "Something cuts"

(5) 2010 MAG      The foam "wood" *cuts* easily.

Beth Levin divides this domain, *Verbs of Cutting*, in two subdomains: *cut* verbs and *carve* verbs. This division is made according to the syntactic behavior of verbs, that is, the type of syntactic constructions (alternation) in which each verb participates.

Although my analysis will be mainly focused on the subdomain of *cut* verbs I will also discuss some points regarding Levin's membership criteria to the subdomain of *carve* verbs, since these will be of importance for the present study. I repeat below Levin's classification, as previously shown in section 1:

### "21 Verbs of Cutting

#### 21.1: *Cut* Verbs

**Class Members:** chip, clip, cut, hack, hew, saw, scrape, scratch, slash, snip.

#### 21.2: *Carve* Verbs

**Class Members:** bore, bruise, carve, chip, chop, crop, crush, cube, dent, dice, drill, file, fillet, gash, gouge, grate, grind, mangle, mash, mince, mow, nick, notch, perforate, prune, pulverize, punch, shred, slice, slit, spear, squash, squish." (Levin, 1993, p.156)

Levin ensures that one of the main characteristics shared by verbs belonging to the subdomain of "cut verbs" is that they are verbs of motion, contact and effect. In particular, Levin claims that "the meaning of these verbs relates to what Hale and Keyser (1987) call 'separation in materials integrity'". Moreover, this group can offer some clarification on the instrument or means used. (Levin, 1993, p.157)

According to Levin (1993), the alternations shared by the elements belonging to this subdomain are:

**Conative Alternation:**

- a) Carol cut the bread.
- b) Carol cut at the bread.

**Body-Part Possessor Ascension Alternation (some verbs):**

- a) Carol cut herself on the thumb.
- b) Carol cut her thumb.

**Middle Alternation:**

- a) Carol cut the whole wheat bread.
- b) Whole wheat bread cuts easily.

**Subject Instrument Alternation:**

- a) Carol cut the bread with a knife.
- b) The knife cut the bread.

**Instrument Characteristic Property of alternation (some verbs):**

- a) This knife cut the bread.
- b) This knife cuts well.

**Unintentional interpretation available (some verbs):**

- a) Reflexive object:  
Carol cut herself
- b) Body-part object:  
Carol cut her finger

**Path Phrase (some verbs):**

Carol cut the paper from one end to the other

### **Resultative Phrase:**

- c) Carol cut the envelope open.
- d) Carol cut the bread to pieces.

### **Zero-related Nominal (most verbs) :**

a cut, \*the cut of the paper.

get a cut on the finger. (Levin, 1993, p.156-157)

I have contrasted this list of syntactic alternations that Levin proposes with data from the BNC and COCA. Yet only four of them are shared by the totality of the verbs. Such alternations will be examined below.

### **Conative alternation**

In this construction a prepositional phrase headed by *at* has a very important role as it denotes 'the intended goal or target' towards which the action is conducted, leaving unspecified whether the action has been carried out or not. (Sosa-Acevedo, 2011, p. 228-229). The aforementioned representation also provides a notion of contact and motion to the meaning of these verbs. (Levin, 1993, p.42)

#### **(6) chip:**

- a) we scraped and **chipped it**.
- b) we scraped and **chipped at** it.

#### **(7) clip:**

- a) The man **clipped the hedges**.
- b) The man **clipped at** the hedges.

#### **(8) cut:**

- a) it was a belief that to **cut the roots** with small scissors would make a difference.
- b) it was a belief that to **cut at** the roots with small scissors would make a difference.

#### **(9) hack:**

- a) He **hacked the tree**.
- b) He **hacked at** the tree.

- (10) **hew:**
- a) would inch their way to the base of the mainmast and **hew it** with axes.
  - b) would inch their way to the base of the mainmast and **hew at** it with axes.
- (11) **saw:**
- a) She took up the bread knife and **sawed the cords**.
  - b) She took up the bread knife and **sawed at** the cords.
- (12) **scrape:**
- a) She **scraped the window**.
  - b) She **scraped at** the window.
- (13) **scratch:**
- a) who were eager to **scratch the dirt**.
  - b) who were eager to **scratch at the dirt**.
- (14) **slash:**
- a) Arthur dashed in and **slashed the beast's belly**.
  - b) Arthur dashed in and **slashed at** the beast's belly.
- (15) **snip:**
- a) she **snipped the strand** of hair.
  - b) she **snipped at** the strand of hair.

The above examples demonstrate that all the verbs included in this subdomain share the *conative alternation*, and hence all its features. I will focus on only one example, the number (14), in order to explain the syntactic process that is repeated across all of them. In "Arthur dashed in and **slashed at** the beast's belly", the verb *slash* appears in its intransitive variant (without object) and it is followed by a prepositional phrase *at the beast's belly* which, as we can see, is headed by the preposition *at*. According to the Cambridge Dictionary, the preposition *at* is a direction indicator, meaning "in the direction of", which implies a movement in the action of the verb. In this case, the direction is towards *the beast's belly*, which is the endpoint that *Arthur* wants to *slash*. However, the construction does not specify whether the goal of the action has been fulfilled, and the beast has been finally wounded. Instead, if the phrase were *Arthur (...) slashed the beast* (transitive alternation), the action would have been completed and *the beast* would have been slashed by *Arthur*.



## Middle Alternation

Most linguists agree with the following characteristics as the general properties that explain the *middle alternation*. To begin with, this alternation uses the patient as its subject, and the agent is implicit, meaning that is not explicitly expressed. In addition, this type of construction is usually accompanied by a modal or adverbial element. And finally, although the verbs compatible with the "middle alternation" are essentially transitive, this alternation occurs only in verbs with affected objects. (see Levin, 1993; Taniguchi, 1994)

(16) **Chip**

- a) Carol **chipped the surface** with a hammer.
- b) The surface **chipped easily** when struck with a hammer.

(17) **Clip**

- a) The surgeon **clipped the aneurysm** after drainage.
- b) The aneurysm was **clipped easily** after drainage.

(18) **Cut**

- a) Carol **cut the foam "wood"** with plastic tools.
- b) The foam " wood " **cuts easily** with plastic tools.

(19) **Hew**

- a) Carol **hewed the wood.**
- b) The wood **hews easily.**

(20) **Saw**

- a) Carol **sawed the Pine.**
- b) Pine **saws easily.**

(21) **Scrape**

- a) Carol **scrape the new potatoes.**
- b) New potatoes **scrape easily.**

(22) **Scratch**

- a) Carol **scratched the acrylic.**
- b) Acrylic **scratches easily.**

This time I will use the example (18), which corresponds to the verb cut, to explain this construction. As we can see in "The foam" wood "cuts easily", *The foam "wood"* is at once the subject, and the patient of the sentence, which is the element that receives the

action of cutting easily, therefore it is the affected object. As explained above the construction also includes the modifier *easily* (adverbial), which is located right after the verb.

However, although + says that this alternation takes place in all the members of the subdomain for "cut verbs", both corpora, BNC and COCA, only produced results for the predicates above, leaving off the list the verbs *hack*, *slash* and *snip*.

### **Instrument Subject alternation**

In this construction the so called *intermediary instrument* operates as the subject of the sentence. Levin (1993) gives the three following examples in order to clarify the kind of instrument that can be used as a subject in this type of structure.

- (23) a. David broke the window with a hammer.  
b. The hammer broke the window. (intermediary instrument)
- (24) a. Doug ate the ice cream with a spoon.  
b. \*The spoon ate the ice cream. (enabling/facilitating instrument)
- (25) a. The crane loaded the trunk. (intermediary instrument)  
b. \*The pitchfork loaded the trunk. (facilitating instrument)

In example (24b), the instrument cannot be converted into a subject, since verbs such as *eat* can only take *enabling/facilitating instruments*, and it would make no sense to say that a *spoon* can *eat*. However in example (25b) although the verb *loaded* allows the instrument to become subject, as it is presented in the previous example (25a), some instruments like *The pitchfork* simply cannot operate as subjects. Thereby, depends on the combination of both verb and type instrument, that the latter can function as subject. (Levin, 1993, p.80)

- (26) **Chip**
  - a) Carol **chips** the infeed material **with a knife**.
  - b) The **knife chips** the infeed material.
- (27) **Clip**
  - a) Carol **clip** the green-green leaves curling around Esmeralda's ears **with the scissors**.
  - b) **The scissors clip** the green-green leaves curling around Esmeralda's ears.

- (28) **Cut.**  
 a) Carol **cut** the cloth again **with her scissors.**  
 b) Her **scissors cut** the cloth again.
- (29) **Hack**  
 a) Carol **hacked** Abigail's bonds **with a knife.**  
 b) The **knife hacked** through Abigail's bonds .
- (30) **Hew**  
 a) Carol **hewed** planks for more seaworthy boats **with the iron axe.**  
 b) The iron **axe hewed** planks for more seaworthy boats.
- (31) **Saw**  
 a) Carol **saws** the log **with a saw.**  
 b) **The saw saws** the log.
- (32) **Scrape**  
 a) Carol **scrapes** the material on the other side **with a knife.**  
 b) The **knife scrapes** the material on the other side.
- (33) **Scratch**  
 a) Hubert **scratches** the floor **with his nails.**  
 b) **Hubert's nails scratch** the floor.
- (34) **Slash**  
 a) Carol **slashes** the paste **with a butter knife.**  
 b) **A butter knife slashes** the paste.
- (35) **Snip**  
 a) Carol **snips** the chives into confetti **with the scissors.**  
 b) The scissors **snip the chives** into confetti.

The instances above show how this alternation is also shared by all members of the subdomain "cut verbs".

### **Resultative phrase**

Levin (1993) asserts that the resultative construction describes the state obtained as a result of the action specified by the verb.

- (36) Chip            all this hewn stone **chipped into** rattling dice.
- (37) Clip            Twenty rhizomes (four per treatment) were  
                          then **clipped into** fragments.

- (38) Cut            he **cut** his leg **open** with the knife.
- (39) Hack            Somebody **hacked** her neck **open** while she was alive, and she slowly bled to death.
- (40) Hew            Jordan has more than 2000 monuments; most **hewed into** the coloured sandstone and limestone mountains.
- (41) Saw            The woman waved while the man on the stage **sawed her in half**.
- (42) Scrape            **Scrape open** the surgical scar.
- (43) Scratch            Others **scratch open** the Euphorbia branches.
- (44) Slash            the head was nearly severed, and the face **slashed to pieces** by a whip.
- (45) Snip            the scissors **snip** the chives **into confetti**.

Using as reference example (41) "The woman waved while the man on the stage sawed her in half", we see clearly how the prepositional phrase *in half* gives us information about the outcome of the action of *sawing*, which in this case is that *the woman* has been cut in two pieces down the middle of her body.

## 5. CONSIDERATIONS TO FORWARD A NEW PROPOSAL

In order to present a new proposal, I will analyze some characteristics of Levin's work with which I disagree. The first discrepancy to which I will refer is related to the semantic behavior of verbs belonging to "cut verbs".

As I explained above, the meaning of the verb *cut*, "to make an opening / wound / mark in sth // sb with a sharp-edged tool", is the archisememe of this subdomain, since it is the more generic meaning and the one that all members share. It is worth emphasizing that, as Levin (1993) points out, the meaning of these verbs involves a "separation in material integrity."

However, one of the ten *cut* verbs in Levin's (1993) list, in my opinion does not meet the same semantic features as the rest. This is the case of *scrape*. After searching several dictionaries such as *Oxford Learners Dictionary* and the *Cambridge Dictionary* among others, the most common senses that showed up for *scrape* were the following:

- **to remove** an unwanted covering or a top layer from something, especially using a sharp edge or something rough: *Scrape your boots clean before you come in.*
- **to remove** something from a surface by moving something sharp and hard like a knife across it: *She scraped the mud off her boots.*
- **to (cause to) rub** against a surface so that slight damage or an unpleasant noise is produced: *Jackie fell over and scraped her knee (on the pavement).*
- **to rub** something by accident so that it gets damaged or hurt: *She fell and scraped her knee.*

As can be observed, *scrape* does not seem to share the main semantic features that all the other verbs share, that is, the similarity in meaning. In the other verbs it is clearly visible how some components of their meaning (in particular the notions of cutting and separation in material integrity') have been inherited from their superordinate. However, *scrape* does not show those notions, but attributes more related to the meanings of "remove" or "rub". Besides, in Faber and Mairal (2003), an analysis that will be treated later on in section 3, these authors do not include in their fine-grained description of this domain such verbal predicate.

Consequently, even if it had the same syntactic behaviour as the rest of the components listed for this subdomain, I firmly believe that the semantic disparity observed above

should count in favour of removing *scrape* from this subdomain and therefore including it elsewhere.

### 5.1. Analysis of Levin's separation of subdomains:

According to Levin (1993) there is a main feature that differentiates these two subdomains: "The *carve* verbs differ from the *cut* verbs in not showing the conative alternation." (Levin, 1993, p.158). Therefore the meaning of these verbs only involves notions of contact and effect, but not that of motion, characteristic of the conative alternation as we saw in the previous explanation.

As it has been exemplified above, alternations imply the possibility of a given verbal predicate to participate in two somehow related constructions, for instance, the transitive and the conative; the transitive and the middle; or the transitive and the instrument subject alternation. However, henceforth I will only illustrate these alternations with the second construction<sup>5</sup>.

After a deep and an extensive data-gathering in the BNC and COCA, I can conclude that some verbs belonging to the subcategory of *carve* verbs in particular *chop*, *gouge*, *mince*, *nick* and *slice* share one characteristic that defies Levin's analysis. They all show the **conative construction** as part of their syntactic behavior, as can be seen in the examples below:

(46) **Chop:**

- a) Then, with an ax, he **chopped at** the flat plate of face bone.
- b) Harold **chopped at** the ice on the stock tank with a wood axe.
- c) I **chopped at** the line backer's arms with my fists and elbows.

(47) **Gouge:**

- a) [...]began to tear at the thin pelt of ground that covered the rocks.  
She **gouged at it**, skinning her forefingers, broke open the sod, and peeled it.
- b) [...]piercing of an arrow and the grate of a spear point across his skull.  
Thumbs **gouged at** his eyes, and boot heels ground his fingers.
- c) [...]this one here uses its claws to **gouge at** the throat of its opponent.

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<sup>5</sup> In order to properly illustrate each construction, I try to provide at least three examples of each one, although this goal is not always achieved.

- (48) **Mince:**
- a) Tom pouted and **minced at** him.
- (49) **Nick:**
- a) [...] examiner testify that you didn't stab his penis. What you did was you **nicked at** it...
  - b) [...] still pricked along my forearms and *nicked at* the back of my neck.
- (50) **Slice:**
- a) Her blade **sliced at** his hand and knocked the knife from it.
  - b) I **sliced at** my pancake with a small, plastic Spork.
  - c) The splintered roots **sliced at** his tongue.

Consider what would happen if we removed the preposition "at" from any of the previous examples. Let's take the case of (46b) "Harold *chopped at* the ice...". If we eliminate the preposition *at* we are left with "Harold chopped the ice". In this sentence only contact and effect are highlighted, and no 'intended goal or target is addressed', as it is understood that the chopping has been completed and the goal of this action, to have chopped the ice, has been achieved.

However, each of these verbs illustrated above, besides being verbs of contact and effect, can also show an underlying idea of motion triggered by the preposition *at*, which indicates a direction, whether it be *the line backer's arms* in example (46c), *the throat of its opponent* in example (47c), or *the back of my neck* in example (49b). The preposition *at* in all these instances has a big impact on the semantics of these verbs, as its role in this construction leaves unspecified whether the goal of the action has finally been achieved or not. Thereby we are left with the doubt as to whether the opponent of example (47c) was finally wounded at the throat or if the back of the neck of the person in the example (49b) remained intact or was injured, along with the uncertainty of all the other instances above that remain unspecified. Therefore, at least five of the verbs in Levin's list located in the subcategory of carve verbs show the conative alternation. This fact contradicts the original criterion for this division by invalidating the main feature that marks the difference between the two subdomains she has established.

Besides Levin (1993) claims that the carve verbs "do not show the body-part possessor ascension alternation" and that "Most of them do not seem to be able to take resultative phrases". However, after a rather more thorough search, I have found some evidence

that once again defy what Levin affirms. This time I have used as tools to verify the examples, not only the BNC and COCA, but also I have gathered examples from different sources such as books, studies or articles found in Google Scholar. What follows are a few examples I have collected of the verbs *chop*, *gouge*, *mince*, *nick* and *slice* in order to prove that they also show the resultative phrase and the body-part possessor ascension alternation:

### **Resultative phrase**

#### (51) **Chop:**

- a) She had stolen a fire ax from the casino hotel and used it to **chop open** the body cavity of the dead Arab.
- b) He skinned it and **chopped it into** chunks.
- c) Two rotten logs were selected and **chopped open** for a total length of one meter each.

#### (52) **Gouge:**

- a) we can **gouge open** the corpse and remove the organ.
- b) doors **gouged open** with axes.
- c) On his way to **gouge open** the statue.

#### (53) **Mince:**

- a) it's been **minced into** very small pieces.
- b) **Mince into** fine pieces, let settle, remove and mix.

#### (54) **Nick:**

- a) GlyRs generated in *Xenopus* oocytes are proteolytically nicked into fragments of 35 and 13D.

#### (55) **Slice:**

- a) Markham **sliced open** the MISC BEDROOM box with his house key.
- b) Mom carefully **sliced open** the wrappings around Christmas gifts.
- c) she forces us to sample her lemon bar - I **sliced it into** four pieces.



**Body-part possessor ascension alternation:**

(56) **Chop:**

- a) he **chopped his** knee badly.
- b) Another slave in Virginia **chopped his** left hand off.
- c) She then took her jembe and **chopped her** own head off.

(57) **Gouge:**

- a) She had **gouged her** belly until it was a mess of meat and blood.
- b) In response, he shut himself in his room and seriously **gouged his** wrists with a blunt knife.
- c) Oedipus **gouges his** eyes out and leaves the city.

(58) **Mince: (No examples found)**

(59) **Nick:**

- a) she **nicked her** knee.
- b) She **nicks her** finger.
- c) Jones **nicked his** cheek while shaving with a razor.

(60) **Slice:**

- a) He **sliced her** in half like a fish for drying.
- b) He **sliced his** flesh into strips.
- c) he **sliced his** finger on a shell.

In all the cases shown above, only *mince* has been left as no examples have been found showing the body-part possessor ascension alternation. Nevertheless for all other verbs it was easy to find several examples that demonstrate that they can take these two constructions.

As I will present in the next instances, the middle alternation seems to be the only one, that according to Levin (1993), is shared also by both subdomains (Carve verbs and Cut verbs).

**Middle construction:**

(61) **Chop:**

- a) Vegetables **chop easily**.
- b) This stonelike nucleus may not fracture or **chop easily** but can be emulsified from “outside-in”Gills.
- c) Here the roving should **chop easily**.

(62) **Gouge:**

- a) [...] closed-cell foam is less easy to compress, but does not tear/**gouge easily** and does not absorb liquid.
- b) [...] it is relatively soft and will scratch or **gouge easily**, potentially destroying the accuracy and usefulness of the tripod.
- c) The material also **gouges easily**.

(63) **Mince:**

- a) When it's time to use them, snip or chop the herbs without thawing as they **mince easily** while frozen.
- b) Some tissues **mince easily** while others are exceedingly difficult to separate.
- c) [...] endoscopic resection of the prostate **minces easily**.

(64) **Nick:**

- a) An edge that is too thin will cut fast but will also **nick easily**.

(65) **Slice:**

- a) [...] and cook 6 to 7 hours or until meat is tender and **slices easily** .
- b) The apple **slices easily**.
- c) This salami **slices easily**.

In the table below you can see more concisely and schematically the outcomes of this analysis.

	Conative construction	Middle construction	Instrument subject construction	Resultative phrase
Chop	+	+	+	+
Gouge	+	+	+	+
Mince	+	+	-	+
Nick	+	+	+	+
Slice	+	+	+	+

**Table 2**

All these examples help us to conclude that contrary to Levin's classification, I strongly believe that the verbs: *chop*, *gouge*, *nick* and *slice*, which have in common that all share the four alternations shown above, should be removed from the subdomain of *carve* verb and therefore included in the list of *cut* verbs.

### 5.2. Analysis of Faber and Mairal's approach:

Another work I have had into account for the development of my proposal is *Representación Léxica y Esquemas Léxicos* (2003). In it Faber and Mairal introduce a different classification from the one we have previously seen (by Levin). As I stated earlier, though both studies have many similarities, they also differ in some points that will be discussed in this section. Faber and Mairal present the following list (previously referred to in section 1) for Verbs of Cutting:

**CUT** to make an opening/wound/mark in sth//sb with a sharp-edged tool.

**hew** to CUT a large piece out of a rock, stone or another hard material in a rough way, usu. with difficulty.

**prune** to CUT off branches from trees/bushes/plants that they will grow better in the future.

**shave** to CUT off hair from the face/body-part very close to the skin with a razor/shaver.

**gash** to make a long, deep CUT in the skin. <body-part>

**nick** to make a small, shallow CUT in sth, usu. accidentally.

- slash** to CUT sth with a sharp-edged tool with a quick, strong swinging movement (a long, deep, cut.)
- lop** to CUT sth from what it was attached to with quick, strong stroke.
- slice** to CUT sth into thin, flat pieces.
- chop** to CUT sth into pieces by repeatedly hitting it with a sharp-edged tool (axe, knife, etc.).
- hack** to CUT sth into uneven pieces in a rough, violent way.
- whittle** to CUT sth (wood) to a smaller size by removing small, thin pieces.
- chisel** to CUT sth (stone/wood/metal) into a special shape as if with a chisel.
- carve** to CUT wood/stone into a special shape.
- saw** to CUT sth (branch/tree) with a saw.
- clip** to CUT a piece/s from sth with scissors or another sharp-edged tool to make them shorter/neater.
- snip** to CUT sth as if with scissors with short, quick movements.
- shear** to CUT sth (wool/hair) off (as if) with shears.
- mow** to CUT sth (grass, plant with long stems, what grows in a field, etc.), using a machine/scythe. (Faber and Mairal, 2003, p. 38)

As can be seen in previous sentences, most verbs are already familiar to us, since almost all have been listed in Levin's classification, either within the subdomain of Carve Verbs as *carve*, *chop*, *gash*, *mow*, *nick*, *prune* and *slice*, or within the subdomain of Cut Verbs as *clip*, *hack*, *hew*, *saw*, *slash* and *snip*. However, Faber and Mairal introduce five new verbs: *chisel*, *lop*, *shave*, *shear* and *whittle*, that are not mentioned, nor classified by Levin as part of the domain of Verbs of Cutting.

In order to find out whether they can be part of the subdomain of Cut Verbs, in which my work is focused, I will see whether these verbs can operate in the four constructions that characterize this subcategory: Conative alternation, Middle alternation, Body-part possessor ascension alternation and Resultative phrase

I start with the **Conative construction** since it is the one that marks the difference between the two subdomains within the Verbs of cutting.

(66) **Chisel:**

- a) Arthur continued to **chisel at** his workbench.
- b) they'd chip and **chisel at it** until they got results.
- c) patiently **chiseled at** it to make it a reference work.

(67) **Lop: (No examples found)**

(68) **Shave:**

- a) their father pulling the upper flap of skin and hair backward while Sherman **shaved at** it underneath.
- b) I took the aluminum wire and shaved and **shaved at** it until the whole stood irresolutely in the liquid.

(69) **Shear:**

- a) by introducing additional bending and **shear at it** when the stamp is pneumatically pressurized.

(70) **Whittle:**

- a) Third World artist, in Szeemann's view, either likes to **whittle at** blocks of wood(...).
- b) Also, during the one-day camp in Vaasa, some pupils **whittled at** living trees.
- c) Tuvans enjoy carving and it is common to see someone waiting for a bus bring a carving out of their pocket and **whittle at it** with a knife.

From this evidence, we can conclude that the four of the five verbs concerned (*chisel*, *shave*, *shear* and *whittle*) can take the conative construction. Leaving the verb *lop* out of the list.

### **Middle construction**

(71) **Chisel: (No examples found)**

(72) **Lop: (No examples found)**

(73) **Shave:**

- a) the coating portion is **shaved easily** .
- b) John **shaves (easily)**.
- c) The barber shaves quickly because the razor shaves smoothly and the customer **shaves easily**.

(74) **Shear:**

- a) the fluid begins to behave like a plastic solid and **shears easily**.
- b) the sliding surfaces that **shears easily** and prevents direct metal-to-metal contact.
- c) Fresh pericardium **sheared easily** at low shear stresses.

(75) **Whittle:**

- a) the wood is so coarse and stubborn that it does not **whittle easily** and smoothly.

In this case the verbs *chisel* and *lop* are the ones which do not take the middle alternation as part of their syntactic behavior. So they will also be left out of the list.

### **Body-part possessor ascension alternation:**

(76) **Chisel: (No examples found)**

(77) **Lop:**

- a) Shrapnel **lopped her** legs off at the knee.
- b) her ex-boyfriend had **lopped his** finger off.

(78) **Shave:**

- a) Lew had **shaved his** massive head cue-ball-bald.
- b) Marvin had **shaved his** mustache recently.
- c) She has thoughtfully **shaved her** legs for the artist

(79) **Shear:**

- a) do you think she'd **sheared her** hair if there'd been an open door of communication?

(80) **Whittle: (No examples found)**

The Body-part possessor ascension alternation works only with the verbs *lop*, *shave* and *shear*, whereas for the verbs *chisel* and *whittle* I could not find any example.

**Resultative phrase**

(81) **Chisel:**

- a) bricks may also be sculpted or **chiseled into shape**.
- b) The audacious strip of concrete had been **chiseled to pieces**.
- c) they **chiseled open** the rock and removed four children.

(82) **Lop:**

- a) the cut material would be bucked and **lopped into** smaller pieces.
- b) the turves bushes were planted and **lopped into** shape.

(83) **Shave:**

- a) Brad finally decided to **shave off** the facial hair.
- b) the man had just **shaved off** a beard and thick, wild hair.
- c) he **shaves clean** now every couple of days.

(84) **Shear:**

- a) As the blister 36 is **sheared open**.
- b) all minerals except augite **are sheared into thin bands** with an aspect ratio of individual grains often over 1.
- c) All samples were **sheared to pieces**.

(85) **Whittle:**

- a) Thomas Hunt Morgan scrutinized planaria, flatworms that can regenerate even when **whittled into** 279 bits.
- b) It can be **whittled to pieces** in the spring.
- c) Her bones had been **whittled clean**.

As seen in the examples above, in this case the five verbs concerned do work with the Resultative phrase..

The following table summarizes this last analysis providing a clearer picture of the results.

	Conative construction	Middle construction	Body-part Possessor Ascension Alternation	Resultative phrase
Chisel	+	+	-	+
Lop	-	-	+	+
Shave	+	+	+	+
Shear	+	+	+	+
Whittle	+	+	-	+

Table 3

Out of the five verbs displayed in Faber and Mairal's classification, that did not appear listed in any of the subdomains belonging to the Verbs of Cutting in Levin's work, nor in Framenet, only two of them (*shave* and *shear*) should be included within the



subdomain of Cut Verbs, since as we have seen above, they are the only ones that share the four constructions necessary to be part of it.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The central concern of this paper has been to present a new proposal using as points of reference Levin's classification and Faber and Mairal's work. Such proposal focuses solely on the subdomain of *Cut Verbs* (Levin 1993 also considers a subdomain for *Carve Verbs*)

As a result of my analysis a dual conclusion could be drawn. On the one hand, from a paradigmatic point of view, I believe the verb *scrape*, included within Levin's classification, should be left out of the list, since it does not share the same semantic features that all the other components share. Furthermore, both Faber and Mairal (2003) and FrameNet support this idea, not including it in their respective classifications. On the other hand, from a syntagmatic point of view different inferences could be made. Firstly, the BNC and COCA do not seem to show any result for the verbs *hack*, *slash* and *snip* where they can take part in the middle construction, therefore they should be left out of my list for *cut* verbs. Secondly, the fact that five *carve* verbs, according to Levin (1993), admit, as shown in the examples above, the conative construction implies a change of subdomain. Besides, these five verbs (with the exception of *mince*) have been also found alternating in constructions which are not characteristic of the subdomain proposed by Levin, as it has been mentioned earlier. In other words, *chop*, *gouge*, *nick* and *slice* should be included within the subdomain of *Cut Verb*. Lastly, after comparing Levin's approach with Faber and Mairal's, two of the five verbs Levin did not take into consideration (*shave* and *shear*) as part of her classification share the same syntactic behavior as the rest of the components of this subdomain. For such a reason, I strongly believe they should also be included here.

As a conclusion, the following list integrates the candidates for my proposal of *cut* verbs: *Chip*, *chop*, *clip*, *cut*, *gouge*, *hew*, *mince*, *nick*, *saw*, *scratch*, *shave*, *shear*, *slice*

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## 9. APPENDIX

### ALL THE EXAMPLES FOUND FOR EACH VERB IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER

#### CHIP

- We scraped and chipped it
- We scraped and chipped at it
- Carol clipped the surface with a hammer
- The surface chipped easily when struck with a hammer.
- Others scratch open the Euphorbia branches
- Carol chips the infeed material with a knife
- The knife chips the infeed material
- All this hewn stone chipped into rattling dice

#### CHISEL

- Arthur continued to chisel at his workbench.
- They'd chip and chisel at it until they got results.
- Patiently chiseled at it to make it a reference work
- Bricks may also be sculpted or chiseled into shape.
- The audacious strip of concrete had been chiseled to pieces
- They chiseled open the rock and removed four children

#### CHOP

- Then, with an ax, he chopped at the flat plate of face bone.
- Harold chopped at the ice on the stock tank with a wood axe.
- I chopped at the line backer's arms with my fists and elbows.
- She had stolen a fire ax from the casino hotel and used it to chop open the body cavity of the dead Arab
- He skinned it and chopped it into chunks
- Two rotten logs were selected and chopped open for a total length of one meter each
- He chopped his knee badly.
- Another slave in Virginia chopped his left hand off
- She then took her jembe and chopped her own head off.

- Vegetables chop easily
- This stonelike nucleus may not fracture or chop easily but can be emulsified from “outside-inGills
- Here the roving should chop easily

## CLIP

- The man clipped at the hedges
- The man clipped the hedges
- The surgeon clipped the aneurysm after drainage.
- The aneurysm was clipped easily after drainage.
- Carol clip the green-green leaves curling around Esmeralda's ears with the scissors
- The scissors clip the green-green leaves curling around Esmeralda's ears.
- Twenty rhizomes (four per treatment) were then clipped into fragments

## CUT

- Carol cut the bread.
- Carol cut at the bread
- Carol carved the stone.
- \*Carol carved at the stone
- I cut my fingernails all the time
- The knife cut its throat.
- The foam "wood" cuts easily
- Carol cut the bread.
- Carol cut at the bread.
- Carol cut herself on the thumb.
- Carol cut her thumb.
- Carol cut the whole wheat bread.
- Whole wheat bread cuts easily
- Carol cut the bread with a knife
- The knife cut the bread
- This knife cut the bread.
- This knife cuts well

- Carol cut herself
- It was a belief that to cut the roots with small scissors would make a difference
- It was a belief that to cut at the roots with small scissors would make a difference
- Carol cut her finger
- Carol cut the paper from one end to the other
- Carol cut the envelope open.
- Carol cut the bread to pieces
- Carol cut the foam "wood" with plastic tools
- The foam " wood " cuts easily with plastic tools
- he cut his leg open with the knife.
- Carol cut the cloth again with her scissors
- Her scissors cut the cloth again

## GOUGE

- [...]began to tear at the thin pelt of ground that covered the rocks. She gouged at it, skinning her forefingers, broke open the sod, and peeled it
- [...]piercing of an arrow and the grate of a spear point across his skull. Thumbs gouged at his eyes, and boot heels ground his fingers.
- [...]this one here uses its claws to gouge at the throat of its opponent
- We can gouge open the corpse and remove the organ
- Doors gouged open with axes
- On his way to gouge open the statue,
- She had gouged her belly until it was a mess of meat and blood
- In response, he shut himself in his room and seriously gouged his wrists with a blunt knife
- Oedipus gouges his eyes out and leaves the city
- [...] closed-cell foam is less easy to compress, but does not tear/gouge easily and does not absorb liquid.
- [...] it is relatively soft and will scratch or gouge easily, potentially destroying the accuracy and usefulness of the tripod.
- The material also gouges easily.

## HACK

- He hacked the tree
- He hacked at the tree
- Carol hacked Abigail's bonds with a knife
- The knife hacked through Abigail's bonds
- Somebody hacked her neck open while she was alive, and she slowly bled to death

## HEW

- Would inch their way to the base of the mainmast and hew it with axes
- Would inch their way to the base of the mainmast and hew at it with axes
- Carol hewed the wood
- The wood hews easily
- Carol hewed planks for more seaworthy boats with the iron axe
- The iron axe hewed planks for more seaworthy boats
- Jordan has more than 2000 monuments; most hewed into the coloured sandstone and limestone mountains

## LOP

- Shrapnel lopped her legs off at the knee
- Her ex-boyfriend had lopped his finger off
- The cut material would be bucked and lopped into smaller pieces
- The turves bushes were planted and lopped into shape

## MINCE

- Tom pouted and minced at him
- It's been minced into very small pieces.
- Mince into fine pieces, let settle, remove and mix
- When it's time to use them, snip or chop the herbs without thawing as they mince easily while frozen.
- Some tissues mince easily while others are exceedingly difficult to separate.
- [...] endoscopic resection of the prostate minces easily

## NICK

- [...] examiner testify that you didn't stab his penis. What you did was you nicked at it... Ms-WRIGHT: (In-court)
- [...] still pricked along my forearms and nicked at the back of my neck.
- GlyRs generated inXenopus oocytes are proteolytically nicked into fragments of 35 and 13 kD
- She nicked her knee
- She nicks her finger
- Jones nicked his cheek while shaving with a razor
- An edge that is too thin will cut fast but will also nick easily

## SAW

- She took up the bread knife and sawed the cords
- She took up the bread knife and sawed at the cords
- Carol sawed the Pine
- Pine saws easily
- Carol saws the log with a saw
- The saw saws the log
- The woman waved while the man on the stage sawed her in half

## SCRAPE

- She scraped the window
- She scraped at the window
- Carol scrape the new potatoes
- New potatoes scrape easily
- Carol scrapes the material on the other side with a knife
- The knife scrapes the material on the other side
- Scrape open the surgical scar

## SCRATCH

- Who were eager to scratch the dirt
- Who were eager to scratch at the dirt



- Carol scratched the acrylic
- Acrylic scratches easily
- Hubert scratches the floor with his nails
- Hubert's nails scratch the floor
- Others scratch open the Euphorbia branches

## SHAVE

- Their father pulling the upper flap of skin and hair backward while Sherman shaved at it underneath
- I took the aluminum wire and shaved and shaved at it until the whole stood irresolutely in the liquid
- The coating portion is shaved easily
- John shaves (easily)
- The barber shaves quickly because the razor shaves smoothly and the customer shaves easily.
- Lew had shaved his massive head cue-ball-bald
- Marvin had shaved his mustache recently
- She has thoughtfully shaved her legs for the artist
- Brad finally decided to shave off the facial hair
- The man had just shaved off a beard and thick, wild hair.
- He shaves clean now every couple of days

## SHEAR

- By introducing additional bending and shear at it when the stamp is pneumatically pressurized
- Do you think she'd sheared her hair if there'd been an open door of communication?
- As the blister 36 is sheared open
- All minerals except augite are sheared into thin bands with an aspect ratio of individual grains often over 1
- All samples were sheared to pieces
- The fluid begins to behave like a plastic solid and shears easily
- The sliding surfaces that shears easily and prevents direct metal-to-metal contact

- Fresh pericardium sheared easily at low shear stresses

## SLASH

- Arthur dashed in and slashed the beast's belly
- Arthur dashed in and slashed at the beast's belly
- Carol slashes the paste with a butter knife
- A butter knife slashes the paste
- The head was nearly severed, and the face slashed to pieces by a whip

## SLICE

- Her blade sliced at his hand and knocked the knife from it.
- I sliced at my pancake with a small, plastic Spork.
- The splintered roots sliced at his tongue.
- Markham sliced open the MISC BEDROOM box with his house key
- Mom carefully sliced open the wrappings around Christmas gifts
- She forces us to sample her lemon bar - I sliced it into four pieces
- He sliced her in half like a fish for drying
- He sliced his flesh into strips
- He sliced his finger on a shell.
- [...] and cook 6 to 7 hours or until meat is tender and slices easily
- The apple slices easily
- This salami slices easily

## SNIP

- She snipped the strand of hair
- She snipped at the strand of hair
- Carol snips the chives into confetti with the scissors
- The scissors snip the chives into confetti

## WHITTLE

- Third World artist, in Szeemann's view, either likes to whittle at blocks of wood(...)
- Also, during the one-day camp in Vaasa, some pupils whittled at living trees

- Tuvans enjoy carving and it is common to see someone waiting for a bus bring a carving out of their pocket and whittle at it with a knife
- The wood is so coarse and stubborn that it does not whittle easily and smoothly
- Thomas Hunt Morgan scrutinized planaria, flatworms that can regenerate even when whittled into 279 bits
- It can be whittled to pieces in the spring
- Her bones had been whittled clean

# Lexematic analysis

	To make an opening/wound/mark in sth with a sharp-edged tool	out of a rock, stone or another hard material	branches from trees/bushes/plants	the skin	hair from face/body-part	something	wood	metal	a piece from sth	wool	hair	in a rough way	with difficulty	long	small	with a quick movement	strong	by repeatedly hitting	in a violent way	with a razor/shaver	with a saw	with scissors	with shears	with a sharp object	into pieces	into fillets	to a smaller size	into a special shape	into a small piece	from a hard material
CUT	+																													
CHIP	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
CHISEL	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	
CHOP	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	
CLIP	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
GOUGE	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	
HACK	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	
HEW	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
LOP	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
MINCE	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	
NICK	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
SAW	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
SCRATCH	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
SHAVE	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
SHEAR	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
SLASH	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
SLICE	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	
SNIP	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
WHITTLE	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	

Levin: Cut Verbs

Levin: Carve Verbs

Faber and Mairal's classification