

**The semantic structures of three terms in  
Australian English: *refugee*, *asylum seeker*, and  
*boat people***

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## Abstract

The issue of immigration, specifically that of ‘unexpected arrivals’ (following O’Doherty and Lecouteur’s [2007] terminology, which aims at avoiding semantic prejudices), is a common topic in various Australian discourses, the language of which generally serves to achieve certain ends and is utilised in particular ways by politicians, journalists, activists, and in day-to-day conversations amongst Australians. The three terms *refugee*, *asylum seeker*, and *boat people* commonly occur in reference to unexpected arrivals, each exhibiting specific usage trends both in isolation and when used together. In this thesis, I present a semantic analysis of these three terms that uses a corpus created from the online comments on episodes of the SBS television programme *Go Back To Where You Came From* (Season 1, 2011). The study aims to account for the particular usages of these terms in Australian English by analysing the semantic structure of each of the terms using a Generative Lexicon (GL) approach (Pustejovsky, 1991b, 1995), enhanced with an appended salience restriction. This salience restriction provides an ordering operation for semantic specifications in the GL qualia structure and hence allows for the representation of different degrees of conceptual salience of semantic components. I use this to extrapolate a conceptual hierarchy, based on those used in psychology (cf. Rosch et al. 1976). I make two major assertions regarding the terms. First, that the terms are differentiated largely by a legitimate/illegitimate distinction, which manifests itself in various ways within the semantic structure. This is reflected as a divergence in the hierarchical structure, with the *refugee* conceptual node being a direct subordinate of legitimate unexpected arrival, and *asylum seeker* and *boat people* being subordinates of *illegitimate unexpected arrival*. *Asylum seeker* and *boat people* appear to be distinguished only by different salience degrees of their semantic components. Second, the data show that there is a flexibility in the linguistic labelling of conceptual nodes, which allows terms for subordinate concepts be used for unlabelled superordinate concepts as well. For example, *refugee* is used to represent both legitimate unexpected arrival and its superordinate concept unexpected arrival. After presenting my analysis, I outline implications of the structure, of generalisation in the hierarchy, and possible implications for the public debate, which has only been addressed in media studies (cf. Pickering 2001) but not linguistics to date, despite the terms’ prominence in Australian discourse.



### **Statement of Originality**

This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

Lochlan Morrissey  
31 October, 2012

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## List of common notations

$\in$	‘member of’; $x \in A$ means $x$ is a member of the set $A$
$\{ \}$	a set, i.e. $\{1, 2, 3\}$ is the set containing the numbers 1, 2, and 3. ‘...’ indicates that the set continues on in the expected way. For example, $\{2, 4, 6, 8, \dots\}$ is the set of all even numbers, because we expect that the set will continue infinitely in the same manner that it has started.
$\langle \rangle$	an ordered set; $\langle 1, 2, 3 \rangle \neq \langle 2, 1, 3 \rangle$ , while $\{1, 2, 3\} = \{2, 1, 3\} = \{3, 2, 1\}$
$ X $	the cardinality of set $X$ ; i.e., how many members are in set $X$
$\llbracket \cdot \rrbracket$	the semantic interpretation of; $\llbracket \alpha \rrbracket$ = the semantic interpretation of $\alpha$
$'$	derivation; $\alpha'$ is a derived form of $\alpha$
$\wedge$	logical conjunction; logical ‘and’
$\vee$	disjunction; logical ‘or’
$\#$	indicates a semantically ill-formed phrase, when written before a phrase
$?$	semantically or syntactically questionable, i.e., not necessarily ill-formed, but not entirely well-formed
$X_i$ OR $X_1$	indexed item within a set; for example, $A = \{Q_i, Q_j, Q_k, \dots\}$ indicates instances of different entities of type $Q$ in set $A$



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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

The issue of immigration has played a strong part in Australian political discourse since at least the beginning of the twentieth century, with the White Australia policy being codified into legislation through the Immigration Restriction Act (1901–58), a policy which gave white immigrants to Australia privileges not given to those of other ethnicities, including immigrants from Asia and the Middle East, as well as restricting the rights of Indigenous Australians (Jupp, 2002: 15). While this policy was officially instated in 1901, with the Federation of Australia, there is evidence that such concerns had already been well established in the nineteenth century (Markey, 1996). Throughout the twentieth century, the issue continued to dominate political discourse, with groups of ethnic Chinese immigrants arriving by boat from China in throughout the seventies and eighties seeing the first unexpected arrivals by boat (Schloenhardt, 2000). However, since the ‘Children Overboard’ incident in 2001 (cf. Leach 2003; Macken-Horarik 2003), immigration, and specifically the issue of ‘boat people’, those people attempting to enter Australia by boat to claim asylum, has been a constant in political discourse; in August 2012, the debate was renewed when the Australian Government passed an Act which will see offshore processing of asylum claims to Australia on the pacific island nation of Nauru, essentially continuing the work of the previous Government’s proposed “Pacific Solution” (cf. Magner 2004).

Three terms used commonly in this discourse are *refugee*, *asylum seeker*, and *boat people*. Previous studies have looked variously at their use in the media (Macken-Horarik, 2003; O’Doherty and Lecouteur, 2007; Pickering, 2001), perceptions by

community groups (Klocker, 2004), as well as their use in Government discourse (Leach, 2003). There has, however, been no linguistic semantic studies of the terms and their usages. This thesis is an attempt to contribute to the literature, by analysing the semantic structures of these three terms. To this end, an analysis based on a semantic framework called the Generative Lexicon (henceforth GL; cf. Pustejovsky 1991b, 1995) is carried out. The analysis is based on data collected from the online comments on the website of Season 1 (2011) of the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) television programme *Go Back to Where you Came From* (Special Broadcasting Service, 2011). As I will show, the semantics of these terms reveal surprising and counterintuitive aspects and specifications, that have implications for the public debate and discourse surrounding the topic of immigration, and compliments and contributes to the literature that has been written.

The plan of the thesis is as follows: in Chapter 2, I explain the relevant aspects of the GL framework and conceptual and linguistic hierarchies (§§2.1–2.3), and provide a brief overview of the academic discourse on refugees, asylum seekers, and boat people, a discourse that has been overwhelmingly non-linguistic to date. (§2.4). Following this, I further detail the data set, and explain its relevance, and the relevance of the GL framework to the present study (§2.5). In Chapter 3, I focus on specific characteristics of the data (§3.1), describe the process of making that data usable for a semantic analysis (§3.2), and give an example of the methodology by applying the GL framework to a selected comment (§3.2.2). Chapter 4 will show the results of the analysis performed on each term individually (§4.1), and then an analysis of the relationships between the terms (§4.2), before presenting a hierarchy indicated by the data (§4.3). I conclude in Chapter 5 with a discussion of the findings of this study, their implications, and suggest future studies that can follow on from this thesis.

I will use the term *unexpected arrival*, contracted in some cases to UA, to refer to any individual arriving in Australia seeking asylum. This term was originally suggested by O’Doherty and Lecouteur (2007) to avoid any semantic prejudice when discussing the terms that are the focus of this study. It is especially useful when those semantic prejudices are the topic of the study, as is the case with this thesis.

## Chapter 2

# Background and rationale

This section will give a brief overview of lexical semantics, in particular to motivate the emergence of the GL theory. Following this, I will give an account of the areas of GL that are relevant to this thesis. I will explicate concept hierarchies in psychology and linguistics, followed by a brief discussion of existing studies on the meanings and perceptions of unexpected arrivals in the Australian media.

### 2.1 The Generative Lexicon

Lexical semantics is the study of the meanings of words and terms; including not only *what* they mean (although this is of course a serious consideration), but also *how* they mean (cf. Cruse 1986). As a discipline that was considered at times subordinate to Generative Syntax, it has since gained much more attention, from linguistics, computer scientists, and philosophers of language (Elman, 2004). Perhaps the earliest modern formation of a semantic theory is de Saussure's notion of *sign* and *signified*, that is, that each word is a *sign* that stands for some object or concept (the *signified*) in the world (de Saussure and Baskin, 2011). This view leads to the lexicon-as-dictionary metaphor, (cf. Murphy 2003) that each word has a certain number of senses that are enumerated in the mind. Pustejovsky terms this kind of lexicon a *Sense Enumeration Lexicon* (SEL), and gives the following definition (Pustejovsky, 1995: 34).

A lexicon  $L$  is a *Sense Enumeration Lexicon* if and only if for every word

$w$  in  $L$ , having multiple senses  $w_{s_1}, \dots, w_{s_n}$  associated with that word, the lexical entries expressing these senses are stored as  $\{w_{s_1}, \dots, w_{s_n}\}$ .

That is, a SEL is a lexicon where all senses are enumerated in a list, with each sense being an item in that list, such that that list is “a list of all the form-meaning associations in the language.” (Miller, 1999: 4) Take the following two sentences:

- (1) George walked through the door.
- (2) George painted the door.

These two utterances demonstrate two senses of the word *door*, that is,  $door_1$  as an aperture, and  $door_2$  as a physical object. A SEL therefore enumerates this distinction.

- (3)  $door_1$ : aperture  
 $door_2$ : physical object  
...  
 $door_n$

The GL approach is a reaction against the SEL style of lexical semantics, and is an attempt to develop a lexical theory that can account for ambiguity and selection processes<sup>1</sup> in the lexicon, while also being congruent with generative syntax theory. According to Pustejovsky (1995), the SEL theory cannot account for these phenomena in a way that also allows for logical polysemy (i.e. the inclusion of the two senses of *door* in (3)) and allow for creativity and ambiguity in the semantics of words. Pustejovsky (1991b) proposes that each lexical item (and, in more advanced versions of the theory, whole phrases: cf. Pustejovsky 1995: 122–127) can be analysed and described using four structures, each describing a different aspect of the semantics of the word, while providing space for transformative and coercive inter-word operations by describing how the word will be interpreted in context. These are

1. Argument Structure
2. Event Structure

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<sup>1</sup>For example, in (3), a selection process determines which sense is selected in a given situation; for example, it is impossible for *paint* to select  $door_1$ , as there is no way to paint an aperture.

### 3. Qualia Structure

### 4. Inheritance Structure

Each of these will be briefly introduced in the following sections, as I will use them for the semantic representation of the terms in Chapter 4.

#### 2.1.1 Argument Structure

The argument structure (referred to throughout this paper as ARGSTR) is “the behavior of a word as a function, with its arity specified. This is the predicate argument structure for a word, which indicates how it maps to syntactic expressions.” (Pustejovsky, 1991b: 419) Pustejovsky (1995: 63) states that “the argument structure for a word can be seen as a minimal specification of its lexical semantics.” The argument structure can be considered the interface that operates between the semantic functions and the syntactic functions of each lexical item. The four types of arguments that are allowed to be present in a lexical item’s argument structure are (Pustejovsky, 1995: 63–4):

1. True Arguments: Syntactically realized (i.e. necessary) parameters of the lexical item; e.g.,

*George rode to work.*

In the case of transitive verbs, for example, the true arguments are the subject and object; for ditransitive verbs, they are the subject, the direct object, and the indirect object. These are the required arguments that the verbs must take in order to be syntactically well-formed.

2. Default Arguments: Parameters which participate in the logical expressions in the qualia, but which are not necessarily expressed syntactically; e.g.,

*John built the house out of bricks.*

*George refilled the fountain pen with blue ink.*

These arguments generally appear in the semantic specifications of the participating lexemes; for example, *house* would have a specification that it is made of bricks, or some other material, and it is therefore assumed that this material

is used when building the house. Similarly, the semantics of *pen* specify that it uses ink.

3. Shadow Arguments: Parameters which are semantically incorporated into the lexical item. They can be expressed only by operations of subtyping or discourse specifications; e.g.,

*Mary watered her garden with purified water.*

Without the specification, the utterance becomes semantic ill-formed.

*#Mary watered her garden with water.*

The semantics of the verb *to water* specify that water is used, and renders the explicit inclusion of the material used a tautology.

4. True Adjuncts: Parameters which modify the logical expression, but are part of the situational interpretation, and are not tied to any particular lexical item's semantic representation; e.g.,

*Mary rode to work on Tuesday.*

*George often chooses to walk to work.*

True adjuncts do not, therefore, affect the semantics of the lexemes in the utterance, but contribute to its pragmatic interpretation. For example, whether Mary rides to work on Tuesday or Thursday does not alter the semantics of *ride*, or *work*, or *Mary*.

### 2.1.2 Event Structure

Pustejovsky (1995: 419) defines the GL's event structure (EVENTSTR) as "identification of the particular event type ... for a word or phrase." Because this study deals with the semantic structures of three nominals, a comprehensive account of the extended event structure is not necessary, beyond the following foundational exposition. It will serve to highlight certain obligatory aspects of the EVENTSTR which will appear in attribute-value matrices of the semantic structures of the nominals, such as the ordering of subevents, which provides a powerful tool for distinction and specification of the terms' structures. Cf. Pustejovsky (1991b, 1995) for further

discussion of the (extended) event structure. Pustejovsky's formulation is based on there being three basic event types: state, transition, and ...process. States denote those events which are characterised by "no change occurring ... and no reference to initial or final periods," and display a "homogeneity ... that distinguishes them from the other aspectual types" (Pustejovsky, 1991a: 35). Examples of state events are highlighted in example (4).

(4) George *believes* that Mary is *sick*.

Both of these events, *believe* and *sick* lack initial or final periods, and are characterised as homogenous. Transitions are events that see a shift from one state to another (Pustejovsky, 1991b: 418), such as the utterance in (5).

(5) The door *shut*.

In this example, the door transitions from *not closed* to *closed*, two statal events. Process events "assert that the [event] has a logical culmination or duration," (Pustejovsky, 1991a: 34), such as example (6).

(6) Mary *walked* to George's house.

(6) implies that there is a beginning to the journey, and that it will end upon Mary's arrival to George's house; the temporal boundaries of the event are specified, albeit not explicitly. To highlight the usefulness of these distinctions, as well as other devices of the GL theory, Pustejovsky (1991b: 421–3) provides examples (7) and (8).

(7) John *baked* a cake.

(8) John *baked* a potato.

The *bake* events in these two examples are different; in (7), it is a process, whereby John makes a cake by gathering the ingredients and following a procedure which results in a cake being 'created,' while in (8) is a transition event, as the potato changes states, from 'not baked' to 'baked.'

While formulations of event structure, including the recognition of these three event types, existed before the GL (cf., e.g., Davidson 1967b,a; Bach 1986; Parsons

1990), Pustejovsky and Busa (1995) proposed a finer-grained subevental structure, called the “extended event structure.” The extended event structure uses notation conventions based on those used in van Benthem and Doets (1983) and Kamp (1979), and is defined as a “tuple,  $\langle E, \preceq, <, \circ, \sqsubseteq, * \rangle$ , where  $E$  is the set of events,  $\preceq$  is a partial order of *part-of*,  $<$  is a strict partial order,  $\circ$  is overlap,  $\sqsubseteq$  is inclusion, and  $*$  designates the ‘head’ of an event” (Pustejovsky, 1995: 69). The extended event structure serves to order an event’s subevents in a meaningful way; for example, the semantics for the verb *kill*, as given by Pustejovsky (1995: 208), indicates two subevents,  $e_1$  and  $e_2$ , which are of process and state event types, respectively. The order of the subevents is given as  $<_{\infty}$ , that is, an “exhaustive ordered part of,” (cf. Pustejovsky 1995: 69), where  $e_1$  represents the process (or act) of  $x$  killing  $y$ , and  $e_2$  indicates the state of  $x$  being dead. Such subevental specifications are represented in an attribute-value matrix, discussed in §2.1.5.

### 2.1.3 Qualia Structure

The Qualia Structure (QUALIA) of a word is “the essential attributes of an object as defined by the lexical item” (Pustejovsky, 1991b: 419), with Johnston and Busa (1996: 78) describing it for noun-noun compounds as “the ‘glue’ which links together the semantic contributions of modifying nouns and the head noun in the compound.” It is made up of a further four roles (Pustejovsky, 1995: 85–6):

1. **Constitutive Role (CONST):** The relation between an entity and its constituents, or proper parts. Examples include material, weight, and parts, etc.
2. **Formal Role (FORMAL):** That which distinguishes the entity within a larger domain, e.g., orientation, shape, dimensionality, colour, etc.
3. **Telic Role (TELIC):** Purpose and function of the entity, e.g., built-in function or aim which specifies certain activities, or purpose that an agent has in performing an act, etc.
4. **Agentive Role (AGENT):** Factors involved in the origin or “bringing about” of an entity, e.g., creator, natural kind, causal chain, etc.

An example of a word’s qualia structure is that which Pustejovsky (1991b) gives for *door*. As discussed in §2.1, specifically (1) and (2), two readings of the semantics of *door* are possible, as an aperture, or a physical object. These are expressed in the qualia structure<sup>2</sup> of the noun, seen in (9), taken from Pustejovsky (1991b: 432), where T is a transition event, and z is the agent that is passing through the aperture.

(9) door(\*x\*,\*y\*)  
 Const: aperture(\*y\*)  
 Form: phys-obj(\*x\*)  
 Telic: pass-through(T,z,\*y\*)  
 Agentive: artifact(\*x\*)

Pustejovsky’s explication of the qualia structure is extensive, as the qualia (Pustejovsky, 1995: 86) “provide the structural template over which semantic transformations may apply to alter the denotation of a lexical item or phrase,” forming an integral, and the most original, part of the GL theory. The qualia structure is especially important for this study, as any distinction between the terms largely relies on differences which manifest themselves in the lexical item’s qualia; additionally, it is mainly from analysis of the qualia structure that inferences are made about the terms’ hierarchical structure.

#### 2.1.4 Inheritance structure

The inheritance structure of a word displays “how a lexical structure is related to other structures in the type lattice, and its contribution to the global organization of a lexicon.” (Pustejovsky, 1995: 61) That is, the inheritance structure describes that which lexical items inherit characteristics from superordinate lexical items. For example, a lexical item with an ARGSTR of x:artifact\_tool does not need its AGENT quale specified, as it inherits this from the artifact\_tool specification, which indicates that the object has been (i) created by humans; and (ii) has an explicit purpose defined in the qualia, which is expressed in the TELIC quale. An example of an object with an artifact\_tool specification is a *knife*, which is manufactured, or

<sup>2</sup>Note that the format used in (9) is from an early formulation of the GL theory, and is used here as an illustrative example that presents the information in an intuitive way that does not require any further explanation. In §2.1.5, an alternative style of representation will be introduced that will be used throughout the rest of the thesis.

made by humans, and has an explicit purpose, that is, to *cut*.

This aspect of the semantic structure is closely related to conceptual hierarchies, which will be discussed further in §2.3 below.

### 2.1.5 Attribute-value matrices (AVMs)

Typically in GL, the structure of a word is represented in an attribute-value matrix (AVM). AVMs are often associated in linguistics with Head-driven Phrase Structure Grammar (HPSG) (cf. Pollard and Sag 1994), different formulations of which use them in different ways. They are understood in GL as “expressions of a logical description language, not as shorthand pictures of disjunctive feature structures,” as they are in certain formulations of HPSG (Richter, 2000: 54). AVMs are generally represented as in (10).

$$(10) \quad \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{ATTRIBUTE1} = \text{VALUE1} \\ \text{ATTRIBUTE2} = \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{ATTRIBUTE3} = \text{VALUE2} \\ \text{(FURTHER SPECIFICATIONS)} \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right]$$

In GL, AVMs are used as formal visual representations of logical expressions, rendering them more readable for linguists who do not have a background in formal logic. Examples (11) and (12) show the same qualia structure for the word *novel* expressed using the two notations<sup>3</sup> (from Pustejovsky 1991b: 429), where  $e^T$  specifies an event of the type `transition`.

$$(11) \quad \lambda x[\text{novel}(x) \wedge \text{Const}(x) = \text{narrative}'(x) \wedge \text{Form}(x) = \text{book}'(x) \wedge \text{Telic}(x) = \lambda y \lambda e^T[\text{read}'(x)(y)(e^T)] \wedge \text{Agent}(x) = \lambda y \lambda e^T[\text{write}'(x)(y)(e^T)]]$$

$$(12) \quad \left[ \begin{array}{l} \mathbf{novel} \\ \dots \\ \text{QUALIA} = \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{CONST} = \text{narrative}(x) \\ \text{FORMAL} = \text{book}(x) \\ \text{TELIC} = \text{read}(x, y, e^T) \\ \text{AGENT} = \text{write}(x, y, e^T) \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right]$$

A template AVM for GL theory, with the structures and roles specified above, is represented in example (13) for word  $\alpha$ .  $\text{ARG}_n$  stands for true argument;  $\text{D-ARG}_n$  for de-

<sup>3</sup>This represents an early formulation of the framework; the order of notation is, therefore, slightly different to that used throughout the rest of the thesis.

$$(13) \left[ \begin{array}{l} \alpha \\ \\ \text{ARGSTR} = \\ \\ \text{EVENTSTR} = \\ \\ \text{QUALIA} = \end{array} \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{ARG}_1 = \dots \\ \text{ARG}_2 = \dots \\ \text{D-ARG}_1 = \dots \\ \text{S-ARG}_1 = \dots \\ \\ e_1 = \dots \\ e_2 = \dots \\ \text{RESTR} = \dots \\ \\ \text{CONST} = \dots \\ \text{FORMAL} = \dots \\ \text{TELIC} = \dots \\ \text{AGENT} = \dots \end{array} \right] \right]$$

fault argument, and; S-ARG<sub>n</sub> for shadow argument (cf. Pustejovsky 1995: 66–7; cf. also §2.1.1 for further explication of these terms). In EVENTSTR, RESTR refers to the ordering restriction over the events specified in  $e_1$  and  $e_2$ ; for example, RESTR= $<_{\alpha}$  represents an “exhaustive ordered part-of” relation that orders the subevental structure of the lexical item.

### 2.1.6 Types

Types are a major part of GL theory, as they can affect the semanticity of a word more than any other single aspect. Pustejovsky follows standard usage of the concept of semantic types, a definition inherited from typed logic (cf. Jones and Middelburg 1994; Pfenning 1992) which Asher (2011: 49) puts thus: “The general idea is that predicates place type presuppositions on their arguments, which their arguments must satisfy or at least be compatible with.” A type mismatch, i.e., that situation in which some predicate wants a type that is not present in the argument, results in a semantic error. As an example, consider the following utterances.

(14) The knife broke.

(15) #The knife breathed.

This can be explained by a type mismatch, such that there is some animacy requirement as part of the semantic structure of the verb *breathe* that is not present in *knife*.

This is expressed in the AVMs (16) (from Pustejovsky 1995: 148) and (17).

$$(16) \left[ \begin{array}{l} \mathbf{knife} \\ \text{ARGSTR} = \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{ARG}_1 = x:\text{artifact\_tool} \\ \text{D-ARG}_2 = y:\text{phys-obj} \end{array} \right] \\ \text{QUALIA} = \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{FORMAL} = x \\ \text{TELIC} = \text{cut}(e, x, y) \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right]$$

$$(17) \left[ \begin{array}{l} \mathbf{breathe} \\ \text{EVENTSTR} = \left[ \text{E}_1 = e_1:\text{process} \right] \\ \text{ARGSTR} = \left[ \text{ARG}_1 = x:\text{animate\_individual} \right] \\ \text{QUALIA} = \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{FORMAL} = \text{alive}(x) \\ \text{AGENTIVE} = \text{breathe\_act}(e_1, x) \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right]$$

The verb *breathe* requires that the performer of the verb be an ‘animate individual,’ which is not present in the *artifact-tool* argument; by inheritance, then, it is also disjunct in tools such as *knife*. While there are certain operations Pustejovsky provides to allow for words that do not have a strict type match in the semantic structures of two terms (cf. §2.1.7 on type coercion), this example neither satisfies those conditions, nor the conditions of the type coercion operation.

Pustejovsky expands type theory, by introducing *complex* types (also called *dot objects*, as a result of their representation in GL,  $x \bullet y$ ), that allow for a word to take multiple entries for each structure and each quale, where needed. The complex type is defined as “a relation that ‘connects’ the senses [of a word] in a defined way” (Pustejovsky, 1998a: 298). It is important, then, to treat the dot object as part of the semantics of the word itself, and not an observation derived from the semantics of the word; that is, the dot object is not an analytic or enumerative device, but is instead encoded into the word in the same way that the qualia structure is encoded, and not merely a tool of enumeration. Dot objects do not appear in this analysis, and are therefore outside of the scope of this thesis. Cf. Busa (1997); Pustejovsky (1995, 1998a,b); Luo and Callaghan (1998) for further discussion of GL complex types.

### 2.1.7 Generative devices

In this subsection, I will give a brief description of two of the generative devices proposed by Pustejovsky, namely *type coercion*, *selective binding*.

#### Type coercion

Type coercion is one of the major generative devices used by GL, an operation that is taken from computer science, and defined in various ways within different frameworks (cf. Moens and Steedman 1988; Pulman 1997 for different formulations of the operation). It is defined in the GL framework as “a semantic operation that converts an argument to the type which is expected by a function, where it would otherwise cause a type error.” (Pustejovsky, 1995: 111). The conditions for the production of a type error are defined (Pustejovsky, 1993: 83)

- If  $\alpha$  is of type  $\langle b, a \rangle$  and  $\beta$  is of type  $c$ , then
- (i) if type  $c = b$ , then  $\alpha(\beta)$  is of type  $a$ .
  - (ii) if there is a  $\sigma \in \Sigma_\beta$  such that  $\sigma(\beta)$  results in an expression of type  $b$ , then  $\alpha(\sigma(\beta))$  is of type  $a$ .
  - (iii) otherwise a type error is produced.

Note that (i) is the formal definition of type coercion.

Consider example (18).

(18) George finished the book.

The following is the semantic structure of *book* given by Pustejovsky (1995: 116, ex. (29)).

$$(19) \left[ \begin{array}{l} \mathbf{book} \\ \text{ARGSTR} = \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{ARG}_1 = x:\text{information} \\ \text{ARG}_2 = y:\text{physobj} \end{array} \right] \\ \text{QUALIA} = \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{information} \bullet \text{physobj\_lcp} \\ \text{FORMAL} = \text{hold}(y, x) \\ \text{TELIC} = \text{read}(e, w, x \bullet y) \\ \text{AGENT} = \text{write}(e', v, x \bullet y) \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right]$$

The verb *finish* coerces the NP *the book* to the type event, rather than the complex type  $\text{information} \bullet \text{physobj}$ . The NP's TELIC quale allows for this coercion to occur,

and allows the verb to select the meaning it exhibits in this circumstance, that is, *to finish reading*. The verb *finish* is coerced to have another sense in, for example, the following sentence:

(20) Leo Tolstoy finished the book.

Because Tolstoy was an author, it would generally be assumed that *finish* coerces its complement NP *the book* in this case to select the AGENTIVE quale,<sup>4</sup> and, instead of *to finish reading*, the verb becomes *to finish writing*. Observe that it is semantically awkward and semantically impossible for *finish* to select ARG<sub>2</sub>, as the utterances below demonstrate, respectively:

(21) ?The printer finished the book.

(22) #The publisher finished the book.

In (21), *printer* wants to select the *phys\_obj* ARGSTR of the book, while *finish* wants to select the *info* argument. The sentence does not seem completely semantically malformed, as *printer* seems to imply some sort of design process, and therefore it could be argued that it is semantically well-formed. (22), however, is not semantic, as, once more, *publisher* wants to select ARG<sub>2</sub> while *finish* wants to select ARG<sub>1</sub>. These do not seem to be commensurable. These type mismatches occur because there are types within the qualia structures of the verbs that are not compatible with those found in the qualia of the nouns. Similar lexemes are able to take the place of *finish*, while not being able to take others, as demonstrated in the following examples.

(23) Leo Tolstoy completed the book. (writing it)

(24) #George completed the book. (reading it)

(25) ?The publisher completed the book.

It seems from the above examples that *complete* more readily takes the AGENTIVE rather than TELIC role, and so (25) is not completely unsemantic, while (24)

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<sup>4</sup>It is interesting to note that the utterance could mean either that he finished reading a book, or finished writing one, and not violate the semanticity or truth conditions of the utterance.

is.<sup>5</sup> This is caused, I would argue, by the existence of synonyms with matching types that are more salient to their meanings than others. These utterances demonstrate the ability of GL theory to capture different semantic senses of nominals interacting with verbs. This aspect will become very useful throughout my analysis, as often the verbs which act with the three terms provide a great deal of semantic information.

### Selective binding

Selective binding aims to describe why certain lexeme combinations are permitted while others are not. For the purposes of this thesis, this refers to the process of selecting adverbial and adjectival senses of words in relation to nominals. That is, the ability of adjectives and adverbs to take nominals as arguments, where they otherwise would not be able to, and the effects of the qualia structures of the adjective or adverb on the nominal, and vice versa. The formal definition given by Pustejovsky (1995: 129) is

If  $\alpha$  is of type  $\langle a, a \rangle$ ,  $\beta$  is of type  $b$ , and the qualia structure of  $\beta$ ,  $QS_\beta$ , has quale  $q$  of type  $a$ , then  $\alpha\beta$  is of type  $b$ , where  $[[\alpha\beta]] = \beta \cap \alpha(q_\beta)$ .

Informally, if the qualia structure of word  $\beta$  contains a quale of the same type as word  $\alpha$ , the words together are the same type as the type of word  $\beta$ . Consider the following example, from Pustejovsky 1991b: 413:

(26) a fast typist

(26) illustrates a process of selective binding, where the word *fast* expects an event as its complement, but instead is given a nominal. It must be the case, then, that both *fast* and *typist* must each have qualia specifications of the same type, in order that the desired reading can be achieved, i.e.

(27)  $\lambda x[ \dots Telic = \lambda e[type'(e, x) \wedge fast(e)] \dots ]$

The structures for the terms, then, must be something close to

---

<sup>5</sup>Although it seems at the ‘edge’ of semanticality, when used with other similar NPs, such as “George completed the magazine,” (read it) or “George completed the pamphlet.” This seems to violate the type matching restriction.

$$(28) \left[ \begin{array}{l} \mathbf{fast} \\ \text{ARGSTR} = \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{ARG}_1 = x \\ \text{ARG}_2 = e \end{array} \right] \\ \text{EVENTSTR} = \left[ e = \text{process} \right] \\ \text{QUALIA} = \left[ \text{FORMAL} = \text{fast}(e, x) \right] \end{array} \right]$$

$$(29) \left[ \begin{array}{l} \mathbf{typist} \\ \text{ARGSTR} = \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{ARG}_1 = x:\text{human} \\ \text{D-ARG}_1 = y \bullet z:\text{document} \end{array} \right] \\ \text{EVENTSTR} = \left[ e = \text{process} \right] \\ \text{QUALIA} = \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{CONST} = x \\ \text{TELIC} = \text{type}(e, x, y \bullet z) \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right]$$

Note that both *fast* and *typist* are congruent; they both have a quale that contains both specifications  $e$  and  $x$ , the FORMAL and TELIC respectively; therefore, the requirements for selective binding to occur are met, and it is allowed. Furthermore, the FORMAL quale acts on the TELIC quale, which gives the meaning that the typist types quickly, instead of, for example, speaking quickly, or running quickly. The combined phrase is

$$(30) \left[ \begin{array}{l} \mathbf{a fast typist} \\ \text{ARGSTR} = \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{ARG}_1 = x:\text{human} \\ \text{D-ARG}_1 = y \bullet z:\text{document} \end{array} \right] \\ \text{EVENTSTR} = \left[ e = \text{process} \right] \\ \text{QUALIA} = \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{CONST} = x \\ \text{FORMAL} = \text{human}(x) \wedge \text{typist}(x) \wedge \text{fast}(x) \\ \text{TELIC} = \text{type}(e, x, y \bullet z) \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right]$$

### 2.1.8 Summary

The GL approach to semantics, then, provides a powerful set of tools to capture the complexities of lexical meanings and proposes solutions for proposed problems in lexical semantics. It is especially useful for this analysis, as it allows for a precise capturing of the semantics of each of the terms in a dynamic way, while providing scope for operations such as generalisation (cf. §2.1.5), which occur outside of the semantics of any one term.

## 2.2 The salience restriction SAL

The salience restriction SAL is an operation allowing for an ordering, i.e. ranking, of the qualia specifications within a single quale according to their salience. SAL can operate on any quale; however, it cannot order specifications across qualia: for this, multiple SAL operations can be used. I introduce the notation  $Q_1 \rightarrow Q_2$ , which indicates that predicate  $Q_1$  is more salient to, or more prominent in, the meaning of word  $\alpha$  than predicate  $Q_2$ , where  $Q_1$  and  $Q_2$  are part of the same quale.

### Definition

The *salience restriction* is function  $S$  on a set of quale specifications  $X = \{Q_i, \dots, Q_n\}$  generates an  $n$ -tuple,  $X_S$ , such that  $S(X) = X_S$ , where  $X_S = \langle Q_i, \dots, Q_n \rangle$ , and  $|X| > 1$ .

The SAL relation is i) transitive, that is, if  $Q_1 \rightarrow Q_2$ , and  $Q_2 \rightarrow Q_3$ , then  $Q_1 \rightarrow Q_3$ ; ii) irreflexive as there are no ordered pairs with identical first and second members, i.e.,  $\langle Q_i, Q_i \rangle$  cannot occur; and iii) asymmetric, because its strict ordering does not allow for  $\langle Q_j, Q_i \rangle$  to occur, given  $\langle Q_i, Q_j \rangle$  (cf. Partee et al. 1990: 39–43 for further discussion). The introduction of this restriction is motivated by a lack of such an operation in Pustejovsky’s work, despite him making reference to an operation that could have been expanded to fill SAL’s role. This operation was embedded in the semantic structure in Pustejovsky (1991b: 434), calling it the *inheritance path* of a word, which describes the reason some senses of words are considered “more prototypical” than others. Pustejovsky (1991b: 433) gives the example of the two predicates (31) and (32), which demonstrate that, while both predicates are true and exist in the semantic structures of *prisoner*, (31) seems more prototypical than (32).

(31) The prisoner *escaped* last night.

(32) The prisoner *ate* last night.

This occurs, according to Pustejovsky, because *escape* is closer in the inheritance path of the word *prisoner* than *eat*. He does not, however, expand this idea in subsequent work.

The ordering of qualia descriptions is important in differentiating between two words that are similar in terms of their position in the hierarchy, their semantic structures, and their inheritance structures, because while they may have inherited the same semantic specifications, the ordering of these is vital in distinguishing them formally. The implementation of SAL is realised in the qualia structure demonstrated in (33).

$$(33) \left[ \begin{array}{l} \alpha \\ \text{QUALIA} = \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{SAL} = Q_1 \rightarrow Q_2 \\ \text{QUALE} = Q_1, Q_2 \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right]$$

In cases where more than one SAL operation is required, i.e., in those cases where two qualia exhibit an ordering of their specifications, the quale on which the SAL is acting will be specified by a subscript letter on the  $\rightarrow$  operator, as shown in (34).

$$(34) \left[ \begin{array}{l} \alpha \\ \text{QUALIA} = \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{SAL} = \left[ \begin{array}{l} Q_1 \rightarrow_t Q_2 \\ Q_3 \rightarrow_a Q_4 \end{array} \right] \\ \text{TELIC} = Q_1, Q_2 \\ \text{AGENT} = Q_3, Q_4 \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right]$$

Note that there will be instances when two predicates will not be adjacent within  $X_S$ . In this case, the SAL notation in the semantic structure is given in (35).

$$(35) \left[ \begin{array}{l} \alpha \\ \text{QUALIA} = \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{SAL} = Q_i \rightarrow_t Q_j \\ \text{TELIC} = Q_k, \dots, Q_l, \dots \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right]$$

Such a case arises in the instance of it being clear that there are other qualia specifications between those highlighted. For the sake of brevity and relevance, these nonessential specifications will not be formally represented in the attribute-value matrix. A short-hand version of the notation indicated in (35), which will be used more often throughout this thesis, is in (36).

$$(36) \left[ \begin{array}{l} \alpha \\ \text{QUALIA} = \left[ \text{TELIC} = \langle Q_i, Q_j \rangle \right] \end{array} \right]$$

Further implications of the SAL for formal semantic are outside of the scope of this paper.

## 2.3 Concept hierarchies

For this thesis, I will make use of a theory of concept hierarchies based on that associated with psychology to analyse the relationships between the terms, and I will use these relationships to describe the function that they each fulfill in Australian discourse. A concept hierarchy is defined by Waxman (1990: 124) as “characterized by a unique logical structure in which lower-order classes are nested within subsequent higher-order classes.” The classes, or categories, “exist whenever two or more distinguishable objects or events are treated equivalently” within the hierarchy (Rosch and Mervis, 1975: 89). Hierarchies are based on levels of specificity, that is, if a concept  $x$  is subordinate to concept  $y$ ,  $x$  has all of the attributes of  $y$ , as well as others. This is demonstrated in Figure 2.1. Note that each subordinate node in the hierarchy represents an entity that is more specific than its direct parent. Nodes that are on the same level are said to be co-ordinate.

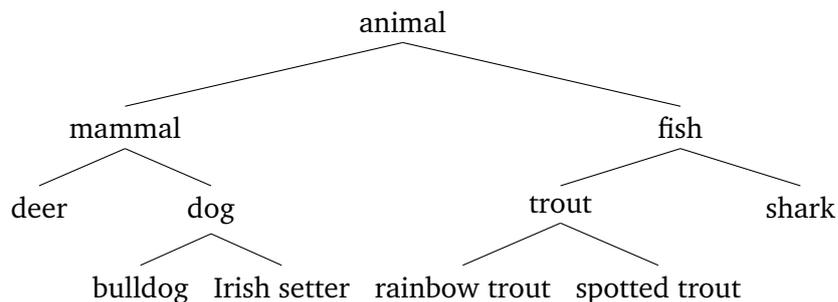


Figure 2.1: A simplified concept hierarchy, adapted from Murphy (2004: 201)

A certain level of the hierarchy is the ‘basic level’, which is the most cognitively efficient level in the hierarchy, that is, the level which contains a certain descriptive power, while using less cognitive power than those levels that require more knowledge, where the information value of attribute clusters is maximised (Rosch and Mervis, 1975: 92). In Figure 2.1, the basic level would be those nodes including *fish*, *deer*, *dog*, and *shark*.<sup>6</sup> The basic level was theorised by Brown 1958, which he named the “level of usual utility,” and which was subsequently developed and experimented on by numerous other authors (Berlin et al., 1973; Dougherty, 1978;

<sup>6</sup> Observe that, because the tree is a highly simplified one, the nodes are not co-ordinate: we can assume that, were a complete taxonomy represented as a tree, the basic level would appear on entities largely co-ordinate.

Jolicoeur et al., 1984; Mervis and Crisafi, 1982). Experimentation shows that the basic level is generally preferred by participants when asked to name certain objects or animals (cf. Rosch et al. 1976; Eimas and Quinn 1994). For example, given a picture of a car, respondents are more likely to call it a *car*, rather than a *Honda* (subordinate) or *vehicle* (superordinate) (cf. Saxby and Anglin 1983). These naming tasks, which served to provide evidence for the basic level theory, are subject to the respondent's level of expertise regarding the topic. For example, someone who collects vintage BMWs will be more likely to know certain specifications about cars than someone who does not drive (cf. Tanaka and Taylor 1991; Johnson and Mervis 1997). However, it is found that the basic level term is the most likely to be named when prompted in most cases, demonstrated by experiments that use categorisation of invented objects (Lassaline et al., 1992; Murphy, 1991). Murphy and Smith (1982) showed that basic categories were formed for pictures of artificial tools, with subordinate and superordinate relationships formed that conformed to those theorised and exhibited in hierarchies of actual objects. The concept of the basic level is shown in this study to affect the usage of the terms, especially in relation to one another, when comparing or contrasting, and assists in understanding why certain semantic generalisation phenomena occur in the hierarchy.

Linguistic hierarchies are generally type hierarchies, and are defined by Copestake and Briscoe (1992: 91–2) as an operator which “defines a partial ordering on the types and specifies which types are *consistent*.” This mirrors the psychological definition of classes existing when two objects are treated equivalently. There have been experiments performed that aim to unify the psychological and linguistic theories (cf. Kathryn-Bock and Warren 1985), but types and type hierarchies can exhibit more flexibility than conceptual categories, even within different regional varieties of the same linguistic group there is evidence that a number of different hierarchies are operating (Cruse, 1977). Pustejovsky (2001: 92) proposes a semantic hierarchy to demonstrate the type hierarchy of the GL (cf. §2.1.6). An example of a type hierarchy, which he calls a ‘tripartite concept lattice,’ is replicated in Figure 2.2, demonstrating the types that are used in the GL, where N stands for Natural, F for Functional, and C for Complex. Note that, where *entity* is used in this hierarchy,

*object* is used in §2.1. This hierarchy has no implications for the analysis in this thesis, but is meant to demonstrate a linguistic type hierarchy, which is pertinent to the framework used. Type hierarchies in linguistics are of particular use to com-

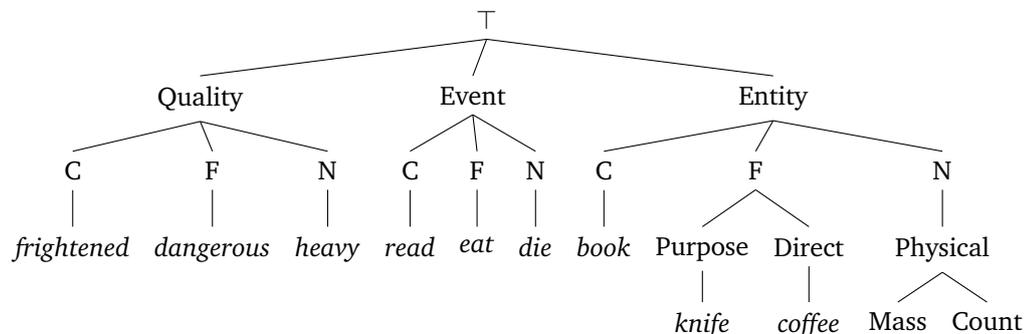


Figure 2.2: A redacted tripartite type lattice, based on Pustejovsky (2001: 92)

putational linguistics, as they allow for parsing and coordinating of semantic terms within a lattice structure, making the results more reliable. Examples of projects that use type hierarchies are Princeton WordNet (Fellbaum, 2010; Bender et al., 2002; Miller, 1990), the LinGO English grammar (Copestake and Flickinger, 2000; Copestake, 1990; Malouf, 1999), and Yago (Suchanek et al., 2007, 2008; De Melo et al., 2008).

Hierarchical structures (cf. §2.3) are represented in the usual way (tree structure, nodes represent concepts, links between nodes represent relationships, and so on); there are, however, a number of notations used in specific ways in this paper, which are given in Figure 2.3. Generalisation is an operation by which labels are allowed to move to occupy conceptual nodes that are superordinate to them within a hierarchy, that is, lose their specificity: this is indicated by arrows. Conceptual nodes are represented as plain text (e.g. a, b, e), while labels are italicised (e.g. c, d). Lexical items that are labeling conceptual nodes are indicated by being inside square brackets [·], while displaced labels that have moved to other nodes are indicated by regular parentheses (·). Note that this does not indicate that the linguistic item still occupies that place in the hierarchy. If the label still occupies the original node and the new node, it will be represented in square brackets.

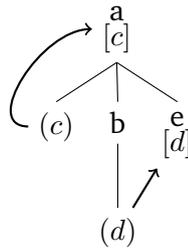


Figure 2.3: A hierarchy showing generalisation, labelling, and notation

## 2.4 Prior literature on *refugees, asylum seekers and boat people in Australia*

This section reviews the academic literature that deals with representations and perceptions of the three terms being analysed in this study, as well as providing Australian dictionary definitions of each of the terms.

Only a small number of studies have looked at representations of refugees, asylum seekers, and boat people in the Australian media, and they deal with the usage of the terms used to refer to these groups in print media, rather than more natural use. Pickering (2001) specifically deals with the representation of refugees as a deviant population, for which she finds three prevailing categories in ‘quality’ broadsheet newspapers, “the invading deviant; the radicalised deviant; and the diseased deviant” (Pickering, 2001: 171). This paper is also interesting because it gives an account of the particular terms that are used in conjunction with the three terms being analysed here:

According to the BCM [Brisbane Courier Mail, –LM] and the SMH [Sydney Morning Herald –LM] ‘we’ are soon to be ‘awash’, ‘swamped’, ‘weathering the influx’, of ‘waves’, ‘latest waves’, ‘more waves’, ‘tides’, ‘floods’, ‘migratory flood’, ‘mass exodus’ of ‘aliens’, ‘queue jumpers’<sup>7</sup>, ‘illegal immigrants’, ‘people smugglers’, ‘boat people’, ‘jumbo people’, ‘jetloads of illegals’, ‘illegal foreigners’, ‘bogus’ and ‘phoney’ applicants, and ‘hungry Asians’ upon ‘our shores’, ‘isolated coastlines’, and ‘deserted beaches’ that make up the ‘promised land’, the ‘land of hope’, the ‘lucky country’, ‘heaven’, ‘the good life’, ‘dream destination’, and they continue to ‘slip through’, ‘sneak in’, ‘gathering to our north’, ‘invade’ with ‘false papers’ or ‘no papers’, ‘exotic diseases’, ‘sicknesses’ as part of ‘gangs’, ‘criminal gangs’, ‘triads’, ‘organized crime’, and ‘Asian crime’. (Pickering,

<sup>7</sup>This term appears with great frequency in the corpus of this study, and therefore in the discussion (cf. §5).

2001: 172)

O’Doherty and Lecouteur (2007) report on a similar experiment to that in this thesis, seeking to find how *refugee*, *asylum seeker*, and *boat people* are represented as categories as in media texts. O’Doherty and Lecouteur (2007: 7) argue that the terms are used, in their data, “in an apparently interchangeable way.” It is this perception that the present study hopes to explore. Regarding the categorisation of unexpected arrivals in the media, O’Doherty and Lecouteur (2007: 2) state that it is “a mistake to consider any group label for this aggregation of people as a natural category,” and observe that (ibid.: 6) “multiple and conflicting categories for unexpected arrivals were a common practice in the examined texts,” an aspect that is discussed more in Chapter 5, where the psychological reality inferred by the semantics does not align with the factual reality present in statistics, and so on. These categories are demonstrated by Klocker (2004), where respondents to a questionnaire showed an overwhelmingly negative response to the arrival of refugees. 92.4% of respondents displayed negative responses to open questions, with attitudes expressed by terms like ‘burden’, ‘threat’, ‘not-human’, and so on (Klocker, 2004: 6). Further studies examine the representation of unexpected arrivals in the media (Macken-Horarik, 2003) and statements and discourse of the Government (Leach, 2003) during the ‘Children Overboard’ incident in 2001, which saw a large amount of interest renewed in immigration, specifically of unexpected arrivals attempting to enter Australia by boat.

The following definitions from the Australian English Macquarie Dictionary (Butler, 2009) suggest that there are slight differences between each of the terms from an Australian English perspective.

**refugee**

someone who flees for refuge or safety, especially to a foreign country, as in time of political upheaval, war, etc.

**asylum seeker**

a person who has applied for asylum in a country not their own and who is awaiting the determination of his or her status as a refugee.

### **boat people**

people who leave their own country and travel in small boats to seek refuge in another country.

The analysis in this thesis shows that these differences, while in the semantics of each of the terms, are not an adequate description.

The literature to date describes well the conception of unexpected arrivals in the Australian media, especially looking at the three terms *refugee*, *asylum seeker*, and *boat people*, but does not describe the semantic structures of these terms in natural use, nor is the methodology used in the articles particularly useful for a purely linguistic analysis of the terms. These shortcomings, in linguistic terms, are matched by the lack of a body of literature on the terms in any field, despite their prominence in public and political discourse, and the potential implications of their use. It is the aim of this thesis to contribute to this field.

## **2.5 Aim and rationale**

The aim of this thesis is thus to apply an analysis based on Pustejovsky's GL theory of meaning and sense selection in natural language to three terms presently in common usage in Australian discourse, namely *refugee*, *asylum seeker*, and *boat people*. Through the application of this framework, i) I examine and explicate the semantic structure of each of the terms; ii) extrapolate from their semantic structures, and also their usages together, a semantic concept hierarchy; and iii) describe how flexibility in the naming operation allows for generalisation of the terms to differing degrees, allowing them to label superordinate concepts within the hierarchy. To this end, I will be analysing a sample of utterances taken from comments responding to Season 1 (2011) of the SBS television programme, *Go Back To Where You Came From* (Special Broadcasting Service, 2011) (henceforth *Go Back*), a reality television programme in which six Australians were given the opportunity to have a 'refugee experience,' by being exposed to situations and challenges that are common for displaced people, with the intention of challenging their assumptions of and prejudices against unexpected arrivals. The participants of the programme met with displaced

people at all points of their journeys, including people settled in Australia, those awaiting asylum in detention centres, those waiting in UN-operated refugee camps, as well as visiting the countries that a large number of refugees flee before entering Australia.<sup>8</sup> I have chosen this data source because i) the comments act as a sizeable sample of language, discussing the topic to which belong the three terms in question (i.e. comments include reactions to the programme, personal opinions on the issue, debate about possible solutions to the issue, and so on); ii) it represents a corpus of language in a relatively natural context, meaning that the comments are not prepared in the way that parliamentary speech is, or edited to the same degree that articles in the press are; and iii) the comments represent opinions largely free from concerns over any repercussions for saying controversial or offensive statements about the three groups, resulting from the commenters' online anonymity (McKenna and Bargh, 2000; Zimbardo, 1969; Ess, 1996; Douglas, 2007).<sup>9</sup>

Comments on the website are subject to a number of guidelines imposed by SBS, meaning that some comments submitted would not have been published, but instead deemed inappropriate by some sort of censorship mechanism. This will not, I believe, have radically compromised the dataset, as there are enough anti-refugee comments and comments about SBS's censorship of comments to suggest that any censorship would have targeted those comments that displayed hatespeech, or other kinds of discriminatory utterances. Examples of hate speech can be considered outliers, and therefore have a minimal effect on the semantic interpretation of each term. Proof of this is the relative rarity of comments such as (37) and (38), they being considered outliers too, because of their infrequency; more extreme comments, we can assume, would be even more infrequent. Note that, throughout the thesis, the comments will be printed verbatim; the spelling, typographical features, and other elements are exactly as they were published on the website. Any emphasis added is mine, as the original comments on the website were entered as plain text,

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<sup>8</sup>More information can be found at <http://www.sbs.com.au/shows/goback>.

<sup>9</sup>McKenna and Bargh (2000) suggest that the anonymity inherent in communications over the Internet generates the conditions for a reduction in users' self-awareness, leading to the deindividuation of a user. Deindividuation, according to a study performed by Zimbardo (1969), can lead to both positive and negative behaviours (though, Zimbardo focussed mostly on the negative effects) that the individual would not otherwise exhibit. This can lead to negative behaviours such as flaming and hatespeech (see Ess, 1996; Douglas, 2007).

without any availability of formatting.

- (37) e2-0300: Although this program shows true insights of refugees miserable life and conditions, it is being broadcasted to brainwash Australians with emotional incidents on this. So that , we dont oppose govt policy to shelter asylum seekers. Most of them are criminals and will do the same things here. Sydney's certain suburbs are the proof of their activity. If you allow 'some' religions here, they will destroy our culture, values and everything because they are rigid and cruel by heart. Ban them, otherwise you will see a '9/11' in Aus in near future...God bless us all ozzies.....
- (38) e1-0766: This is such a biased show. And SBS has censored my comments because I criticized it for doing so. Wow... Isn't that what the regimes you criticize do? SBS... We believe in openness... As long as your views align with ours..SBS is an irresponsible organization with a political agenda that is made up off left wing Wankers! And this show just re-enforces that.

An argument can be made that this data set is not the most representative sample possible. That is, SBS has a very specific viewership, and one that is generally considered more interested in international issues, in television programmes in different languages and about different cultures, and so on. The viewership for more popular commercial stations would, therefore, be a more representative sample of a cross section of Australia, as it would represent both a larger sample, and a sample that is more randomly selected. However, because of the popularity of the programme, and because of a lack of other sufficiently large corpora of Australian English that have a high incidence of the three terms examined in this study, the *Go Back* comments form the best corpus available. Other corpora were considered. For example, the Hansard corpus of Australian parliamentary transcripts was considered initially; however, after a cursory exploratory analysis of the data, it was found that even spontaneous answers to questions during Parliamentary Question Time were well-prepared, and therefore cannot be considered spoken in a truly spontaneous manner. For the same reason, using articles from the popular press would be inappropriate for an analysis of meaning of usage in spontaneous, natural language, as they pass through stringent editorial processes.

This study is motivated by a lack of linguistic analysis that specifically deals with the language of the discourse surround immigration and unexpected arrivals, one that is often discussed across various media in Australia. As the terms pertain

to a contentious issue, for which strong opinions are generally held, usages of these terms exhibit very specific, and in many cases deliberate, uses of the terms to achieve specific argumentative ends, by accentuating certain aspects of their semantic structures, coercing their meanings when making comparisons, and so on. This study, then, will apply GL to language that it has not previously dealt with in great depth; the language of this particular topic, and terms that have meanings more prone to conscious coercion by the speaker. Our understanding of the formal semantic and conceptual hierarchical structures of these terms will be, I believe, enriched by this study. Additionally, there are merely a few studies that use GL with corpus analysis (cf. Kilgarriff 2001; Pustejovsky et al. 1993; Anick and Pustejovsky 1990), and this study, therefore, demonstrates the use of the framework in conjunction with this methodology, and how they can be successfully integrated. Because of the nature of the terms, a certain conceptual hierarchy can be assumed by users, consciously or unconsciously, and their usage reflects this assumed hierarchy; as a hypothetical example, *asylum seeker* could be considered by some speakers a more specific type of *refugee* (for example, refugees awaiting a claim for asylum), as are *boat people* (refugees who enter the country by boat), that is, *asylum seeker* and *boat people* could be considered subordinate in a semantic hierarchy to *refugee* (cf. Murphy 2004; Markman and Wisniewski 1997). This structure seems intuitive, however the data will show that the hierarchy is more complex. This study aims to, therefore, allow for a greater understanding of the terms' usages, through a formalisation of their semantic and hierarchical structures.

The appropriateness of Pustejovsky's approach for these data will become apparent as the analysis is performed. The GL approach provides a model of inter-word meaning construction and coercion, whereby each word affects the meanings of those that it interacts with syntactically, and thus the approach takes linguistic context into account when determining the specific semantics of a linguistic item. As we have seen in §2.1, Pustejovsky (1991b, 1995) proposes a set of generative semantic devices, semantic structures, and ways of describing in rigorous notation these semantic structures. The GL provides a robust set of tools for the analysis of linguistic

expressions and words<sup>10</sup> whose semantic structures are less fixed, which is especially the case for words that are currently in common usage, as is certainly the case with the three terms. A more formal approach is useful, too, insofar as its rigor allows a much more reliable and rigorous account of the semantics of the language. Cruse (2001: 35), for example, states that “[t]he meanings of individual words are not normally experienced as such in the course of everyday linguistic communication, and there is no reason to suppose that our intuitive judgements regarding isolated words are particularly reliable or illuminating.” It is therefore important that a more formal semantic framework that accounts for language in natural context be used, instead of examining the words in isolation; for this reason, the GL approach was chosen.

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<sup>10</sup>Pustejovsky deals mostly with English, however there is research into GL theory in other languages. Cf. Johnston and Busa 1996; Busa and Johnston 1996; Chapter 10 of Pustejovsky 1995.

## Chapter 3

# Methodology

This chapter describes the data and method used in this study. The present study is a corpus analysis of a specified but comparatively small corpus; it therefore follows a certain methodology and organisational principles of the data. I will first describe these data, and give some general statistics regarding the corpus, and my method of collection. Note that the analysis is introspective in nature, and not statistical: these statistics are used to give a general overview of the corpus, and have no bearing on the analysis proper. I will then give an account of the categories I use to make the data more useable. Following this, I give an example of the analytic procedure used in this study by considering an example comment from the corpus, and how it is analysed.

### 3.1 Data

The data used for the analysis was the above-mentioned corpus compiled from the written online comments, posted on the website of each of the episodes of *Go Back* (cf. §2.5). The comments were written by viewers of the television program. The largest volume of comments appears to have been written in the month following the first screening of the program, and therefore represent contemporary usage of the terms. Because the episodes were available online, commenting continued until (and after) the date on which the final version of the corpus was compiled (30 May, 2012). Comments were in plain text, without any formatting outside of that

imposed by the SBS website; for this reason, formatting is achieved using capital letters, nonstandard uses of punctuation, and other devices. These techniques will not be altered when comments are printed. It is impossible to know how many unique commenters are represented in the corpus, because a login was not required in order to comment, and it is possible that a single commenter could have used a different name for each comment posted. The comments will be printed verbatim, with annotations if the meaning of a certain word or phrase is inscrutable.

All comments on each episode were collected and filtered by keyword, the three keywords being *refugee*, *asylum seeker*, *boat people*. These keywords allowed for the -s plural marker on the three terms. *asylum-seeker* and *boat-people*, *asylumseeker* and *boatpeople* were also filtered, for nonstandard spellings, though these results (especially the latter two) returned few results. The filtering was performed automatically using Python scripts, though categorisation of the data was performed manually, as the general level of spelling was too inconsistent for an automated approach to be successfully implemented. The total size of the complete corpus is 295,639 words, with 3,504 comments; the filtered corpus has 167,803 words in 1,625 comments. The number of comments that were usable was relatively small, with only 43 being presented in this thesis, though more were consulted to build the meanings. Generally comments were considered usable if they had an insight about the semantics of one of the terms, or if they were used in a way that illuminates some aspect of the hierarchical structure encompassing the terms. Each comment was given an identifier of the format ‘eY-XXXX’, where Y is the episode number and XXXX is the number of the comment in that episode; for example, the first comment in episode one has the identifier e1-0001, the second e1-0002, and so on.

## 3.2 Mode of analysis

The analysis was based on categorisation of the data, which were based on trends and usages that illuminated some aspect of either the individual semantics of the terms, or the ways in which the semantics of the terms were affected by use with

the other terms. Using these categories, it was far easier to find a significant body of examples of the three terms in common usage, and base an analysis on them, the procedure for which I used will be explicated and demonstrated for an example comment.

### **3.2.1 Categorisation of data**

The categories allowed me to analyse the terms by grouping comments that showed trends of usage. I emphasise that the categories are not, *per se*, meaningful to the semantic structures of the terms, but that they are a methodological device that was used to effectively analyse these structures. The categories were largely intuitive, and were motivated by the difficulties presented by poor spelling and nonstandard punctuation and other orthographical irregularities, which made it impossible to automatically sort the comments any further than by keyword. The data were categorised based on the inferences that are made of the terms' semantic structures in the comments, either by a term's usage with other words, or by the usage of two or all of the terms together. For example, a telic reading of an utterance looked at the telic role, i.e., the purpose, of the entity that was expressed in the comment, and how it was expressed. The categories were built based on certain trends in the data from either a relational or qualia-oriented reading of each comment. The categories are: AS-FOREIGN, AS-HUMAN, CONTRASTIVE, EUROPEAN, LEGITIMATE, SIMILAR, and TELIC. I will now describe each category, and give examples of those comments that were categorised into each.

The AS-FOREIGN and AS-HUMAN categories were based on a constitutive interpretation of certain comments, and showed how the commenter felt about the concept of displaced person relative to themselves, either negatively as in AS-FOREIGN, or positively as in AS-HUMAN. The category AS-FOREIGN comes from a trend found in the comments, in which commenters tend to refer to unexpected arrivals as foreign in an attempt to endow them with negative connotations of being 'against us', and appeal to a sense of opposition between Australians and people entering the country 'illegally'. Comments in the AS-HUMAN category, conversely, generally try to achieve the opposite end, by emphasising the humanity of both parties, and how this makes

any divide superficial. These category names are not meaning to suggest that there is any contrast between foreigners and humans, but is merely highlighting a certain device commonly used in the rhetoric, while also distinguishing between the two other categories CONTRASTIVE and SIMILAR, which describe usages of the terms together, using a contrastive comparison, that is, contrasting the two, or using a similarity comparison, by equivocating them. These comparative usages are exemplified in the following examples (39) and (40) AS-FOREIGN and AS-HUMAN, respectively. Note that the emphasis will always be added by me, as the commenters were not able to do it themselves, because of limitations on the SBS website.

(39) e2-0134: this is about refugees and their religion....not long ago when the Kosovars were given refuge for awhile they were made to go back to what...have you seen Kosovo now...it is still under the umbrella of Nato and Red Cross.....chaos. So why are these refugees counting on staying here for good Being a refugee (???) is not a visa towards permanent residency and should not be abused by the people who take these precarious means to travel to our shores...*I'll be damned if I am going to pay taxes to upkeep this flood whilst our own Australians are making do without !!!*

(40) e1-0519: I hope this program is shown in schools through out Australia, to help balance the constant misinformation from the popular media. Then the Raquels of this world may get an understanding that *refugees are real people in desperate situations.*

(39) demonstrates the ‘us-and-them’ distinction that characterises comments in the AS-FOREIGN category through referring to Australians as “our own.” Similarly, (40), a comment in the AS-HUMAN category attempts to humanise refugees, by calling them “real people,” and emphasising their “desperate situations.”

Following from this, and sharing many comments the two categories AS-HUMAN and AS FOREIGN, the EUROPEAN category represents the bulk of arguments made specifically in support of those termed *boat people*, with the argument generally being that those Europeans who settled Australia in the eighteenth century could also be considered *boat people*. This category was used less than the others, but was formed because of the prevalence of this argument. The following comment shows a typical example of this category.

(41) e3-0250: Fellow Australians, listen closely -- NEVER FORGET we are ALL ‘boat people’ in this land (with the exception of full-blood Aborigines, and no-one is sure if they didn’t paddle across from somewhere....) --- whether we were shipped here

in 1788, fled war, famine or poverty in 19th or 20th centuries, or a month back. For those of us born here, it is just sheer DUMB LUCK -- it was not anything good we did to 'deserve' it, just as people living in war zones, or under corrupt and tyrannical regimes did not commit any sin or crime to deserve that either.

This usage of *boat people* is considered nonstandard, and the commenter appears to acknowledge this by using quotation marks around the term. It does not serve to illuminate anything about the semantic structure of the term *boat people*, other than the obvious 'arrive by boat' event that is present in the qualia structure of *boat people*. This category was included, however, because it represents a trend in the usage of the term that is as frequent as those exhibited in other categories, and not all such comments are nonstandard.

The TELIC category is, unsurprisingly, a category containing certain comments from which the telic quale of each of the three terms can be abstracted, and comments where the teleology of the terms is very clear. This is generally demonstrated by the commenter making a generalisation about unexpected arrivals, and what they do when they arrive in Australia. An example from this category that demonstrates a typical usage is (42).

(42) e1-0717: You work all your life, pay taxes, *these refugees arrive*, and get more from the government, than you do. Is that fair, Australia look after your own first, and send them to to the back of the queue, if they *arrive, by boat*.

This comment infers a certain teleology for *refugee*, namely that they *arrive*; this kind of comment can be used to extrapolate the telic role of the term's qualia structure.

The remaining three categories, SIMILAR, CONTRASTIVE, and LEGITIMATE are the most comprehensive of the categories, because they contain data that are relevant to all four qualia. The data in each emphasize the relationship between the three terms, from which was extrapolated the hierarchy of the terms. Accordingly, SIMILAR contains those comments which explicitly or implicitly create a similarity comparison between any two or all of the terms, usually by conjunctive terms such as *and*, *with*, or sometimes by using a slash to indicate that the terms are equivalent, and so on, while CONTRASTIVE contains comments with a contrastive comparison, usually affected by disjunctive terms *or*, or *not*. Examples include comments (43) and (44) from SIMILAR and CONTRASTIVE, respectively.

(43) e3-0044: I feel that their "experience" was not deep enough. Having worked with *refugees and asylum seekers* in Europe as well as in a camp in Africa, I know that what these people experienced in nowhere close to what refugees go through. [...]

(44) e1-0105: Technically boat people are illegals if they come to Australia via safe harbour. To be counted as a genuine refugee you must stop at the first country of safe harbour. [...]

(44) is considered contrastive because it contrasts *boat people* and *genuine refugees*, and is therefore a negative comparison of the two terms.

LEGITIMATE can be viewed as a sub-category of CONTRASTIVE, showing a particular type of negative comparison, that is, comparing 'legitimate' *refugees/asylum seekers/boat people* (though the idea of a legitimate boat person is rare) with those deemed 'illegitimate'. An example is the following comment

(45) e2-0010: Thanks SBS another great Doco. I do feel for people all over the world who do not have the luxury of living free and easy as we do in Australia. But I do not agree with the people who come here illegally in boats that are cashed up, have credit cards, gold, etc. They have the money to start the journey, pay police and boarder guards bribes to go from one country to another, pay for accomodation, food and then pay heaps to a people smuggler to bring them here. With all that money, why just not go to the embassy and apply legitimately like everyone else and if you have nothing to hide and have good intensions then all should be ok. As I stated before, *I feel for the real refugees stuck in those camps living in squalid humpies*, and little food of good nutritional value, kids getting sick and endless crimes against the weak and vulnerable, a nightmare for the girls and women. I am happy for the government to help the real refugees, *but not the free loaders*.

### 3.2.2 Analytic procedure

The method of determining the terms' semantic structure was to (i) examine the terms' usages, recognising certain trends and norms represented in the data; (ii) extrapolate the values of the four semantic structures based on these trends, and especially by distinctions between the terms; (iii) write these values into semantic structures, look for similarities and differences in the propositions expressed in the semantic structures that serve to evidence certain inheritance paths, from which inheritance structures can be extrapolated; and (iv) determine, from these structures and paths, a hierarchy encompassing all of the terms. I will now demonstrate part of this procedure on comment (46), a procedure that was applied to every comment

that was analysed. It is impossible to provide a full example of the analytic procedure using only one comment, as much of the building of the hierarchy is based on analysis of a number of comments; steps (iii) and (iv) cannot therefore be demonstrated, but will be visible in Chapter 4.

- (46) e1-0438: Apart from the traditional owners all Australians are boat people in one form or another. Any argument against refugees and in particular *genuine asylum seekers* must boil down to racism and xenophobia. We are a fortunate country who can and should do more to help these people and more of these people. [...]

This comment is one that is particularly important in the discussion chapter (cf. §5, ex. (100)). *Asylum seeker* is the term that will be examined here. This comment shows comparisons between two or more of the terms that do not equivocate them, i.e., “against refugees and in particular *genuine asylum seekers*”, placing it in the CONTRASTIVE category. Additionally, it infers a genuineness, taken here to be equivalent to legitimacy, for one of the terms (*asylum seeker*), which also places it in LEGITIMATE. This demonstrates an application of step (i). This comment shows an acceptance of unexpected arrivals, that is, the commenter has a positive opinion of them, which influences their usage of the term. Certain semantic structures can be extrapolated from this comment ; for example, we can say that the CONST quale is ‘human’, by the use of “these people” and the FORMAL quale is ‘foreign’, from the claim of “xenophobia” and “racism.” This is a demonstration of step (ii). We cannot extrapolate the entire semantic structure of *asylum seeker* from just this comment, though it is used with the fragments provided by other comments to devise an entire semantic structure. This comment is an interesting case, as it is a case of selective binding, resulting in generalisation in the hierarchy. *Asylum seeker*, as shown in §4.1.3, has a default illegitimate meaning; comment (46) shows a coercion of the default illegitimate meaning to that of being legitimate, through the expression “*genuine asylum seeker*”. The term’s use with the other terms shows its position relative to them. From a number of comments that show a relationship between the terms, a hierarchy can be extrapolated. Additionally, as further semantic specifications are provided by analysing other comments in this way, inheritance structures become apparent; that is, as qualia, for example, can be identified by looking at a number

of comments, certain qualia appear to be in common between the terms. We can, in this case, assume that they are inherited from other, superordinate terms. This strengthens the evidence for the hierarchical structure inferred from the terms' usages together. This procedure is used throughout the following chapter, where an analysis of each of the terms is performed, followed by an analysis of those instances where the terms are used together.

### **3.3 Summary**

This chapter has described the data set, and the methodologies of both categorisation and analysis that are used to achieve the aims of this thesis. These methodologies will be used in the following chapter on a number of comments from the thesis, from which the semantic structures of the three terms *refugee*, *asylum seeker* and *boat people* will be determined.

## Chapter 4

# *Refugee, asylum seeker, and boat people in Australian English*

This chapter will methodically analyse each of the terms individually (§4.1), using the GL approach, before examining the relationships between them (§4.2), specifically using examples from the corpus where they are used together, where extrapolations will be made to determine their positions within a concept hierarchy (§4.3). An analysis of the structural effects of each term on the others will follow.

### 4.1 Analysis of individual terms

#### 4.1.1 Overall

Refugee is the most used term by some margin, with 1,423 ( $\approx 75.7\%$ ) comments containing the keyword *refugee*, while the keywords *asylum seeker* and *boat people* returned 256 ( $\approx 13.6\%$ ) and 201 ( $\approx 10.7\%$ ) comments, respectively. This immediately suggests that *refugee* is less specific than the other two terms, and perhaps that it is the basic level concept, as it is more reliably referred to in the data set. Indeed, *refugee* appears in symphony with each of the other terms more than the others appear together with each other.

### 4.1.2 *Refugee*

Questions of legitimacy appeared far more frequently for *refugee* than for the other two terms; this would suggest that the legitimacy of their claim for asylum (part of the FORMAL quale) is not yet determined, as it is in *asylum seeker* and *boat people*. *Refugee* carries the most positive connotations, as it is a term that is given the possibility of being legitimate. Comments (47) and (48) show instances of questioning refugee's legitimacy.

- (47) e1-0368: Think about the courage it takes to get on a leaky boat. Think about the desperation these people must be feeling. I'd like to know that new Australians are courageous, determined, very keen on living in a democracy. I think they make great new Aussies. I know what they do is illegal and it would be a nice thing if they could get in line with others but these are people in life threatening situations. (*If they are not legitimate refugees the system will screen them out.*) I'm keen on limited onshore detention then bsorption into the community. The churches and welfare agencies do a lot and the Government should financially support community organisations to help get boat people started. The show is a great concept. Thanks SBS - you're the best.
- (48) e2-0408: Do the majority of Australians actually understand WHY it is essential to detain ALL unlawful arrivals into Australia, whether it be by boat or plane? I suspect they don't quiet understand the reasons for doing so. Sadly, amongst the GENUINE REFUGEES, there are those that hide amongst them and PRETEND to be refugees. It is the fundamental priority of ALL governements to protect its citizens and that includes ENSURING THOSE THAT DO GET ACCEPTED into our great country are the ones truely deserving, and in need. NOT THOSE THAT WILL POSE A FURTHER SECURITY RISK to our way of living. This is WHY ALL MUST BE DETAINED. IF THEY BRING their identification with them then they would spend less time in processing.

These two comments show, interestingly, that *types* of refugee (i.e. legitimate vs. illegitimate) are distinguished, and the comments show this distinction is marked. The highlighted sentence in (47) demonstrates this distinction, by flagging “legitimate refugees”; example (48) demonstrates the distinction throughout, and provides examples of what constitutes legitimate and illegitimate refugees, i.e., those that “will pose a further security risk.” The distinction of legitimacy and illegitimacy is often used when distinguishing between the terms, and is used to coerce the meanings themselves, by the process of selective binding (cf. §2.1.7), to either generalise them, or further specify them. This distinction is, therefore, important to the semantics of the terms, and we find that it appears with a high degree of frequency. The other two terms, as we will see, have a less flexible interpretation in

terms of their legitimacy, evidenced by a certain trend that, when their legitimacy is made explicit, it is usually arguing for a positive view of legitimacy; this indicates that the default interpretation is illegitimate. Utterances that question or refute the legitimacy of the general term *refugee* are proportionally less frequent. The general semantic structure of *refugee* will first be developed, followed by determinations of the legitimate and illegitimate forms of the concept.

The data show that refugees are generally considered human, and are almost certainly foreign (that is, from a place of origin different to that of the speaker). These assumptions are found in comments (49) and (50).

(49) e1-0048: Thank you SBS for sparking such great discussion on this topic. From viewing the hundreds of comments on this website I think the one thing we can all agree on is that we are so lucky to live in a country where freedom of speech can be expressed. Many of the refugees seen on this show don't have this basic human right. *This show has shown that problem is not just about refugees, it's about people living in despair, people that don't have the rights that all humans deserve* but most importantly it's about people who need our help.

(50) e1-0630: Wayy too many refugees here taking over.Where on earth are they all coming from?If I was in their country I would respect them and that its there home.That is why I am not racist.But when they come here taking over our home and our space well that's another story.Take them back before its too late.Go to your homes.This is our home.

The CONST role, therefore, is human, whereas the FORMAL role must be a displaced person, in order to distinguish between *refugees* and other kinds of human. The CONST as human is demonstrated in (49), by the highlighted sentence, which clearly demonstrates that this is part of *refugee's* semantic structure. The FORMAL as displaced is clearly represented in (50), where the commenter makes a distinction between “your home” and “our home.”

The TELIC role of refugee based on the data involves the concept of arrival, or entry, through legal or illegal means, as demonstrated in (51) and (52).

(51) e3-0442: epic! i can't find another word. as one of the australians said, the issue is to complex to divide in black and white, right and wrong. *i'm from germany and we have the same problem with thousands of african refugees arriving on the islands of lampedusa or malta.*i agree with everybody who says that we can't take them all but it is our responsibility to take care of the people and their countries. who profits of the cheap workers in these countries? we do! who profits of the unclear political situation which makes it much more easier for us and our companies to

get the licenses to exploit the resources? we do! i know this a dream, i know this is politics. thanks sbs for this show

- (52) e1-0717: You work all your life, pay taxes, these refugees arrive, and get more from the government, than you do. Is that fair, Australia look after your own first, and send them to to the back of the queue, if they arrive, by boat.

Both comments show that arriving is part of the semantic structure of *refugee*; it is implicit that they have fled, or left, from their country of origin.

The AGENT quale is characterised by escaping or fleeing some kind of threat or dangerous situation in their country of origin. The following comment demonstrates this by arguing that the reason *refugees* flee is precisely because of a dangerous situation in their country of origin. It is also interesting that it references a common sentiment made by other commenters, that the unexpected arrivals interviewed as part of the programme are not representative of the true situation.

- (53) e1-0417: Everyone who is saying "oh they're using some terrible examples to try and rouse an emotional response and make us sympathetic to all boat people" are forgetting that boat people aren't even the crux of Australia's immigration problems; it's the estimated 50,000 illegal VISA overstayers that come through our airports and refuse to leave once their VISA expires. These refugees arriving by sea constitute some minute percentage of illegal immigrants, something like 2%. *The fact that they're risking their lives to flee their countries on overcrowded boats suggests to me that they're probably more deserving of immigration help than people who overstay their VISAs and get legal help appealing their extraditions.*

The above usages generally represent basic-level unexpected arrivals, except those that flag legitimacy (i.e., (47), (48)); the basic level is characterised largely by a lack of the legitimacy distinction, as well as some other specifications. It is the most semantically underspecified of the hierarchical levels. The semantic structure of the basic-level unexpected arrival is represented in (54).

$$(54) \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{UNEXPECTED ARRIVAL} \\ \text{ARGSTR} = \left[ \text{ARG}_1 = x:\text{human} \right] \\ \text{EVENTSTR} = \left[ \begin{array}{l} e_1:\text{transition} \\ e_2:\text{transition} \\ \text{RESTR} = e_2 < e_1 \end{array} \right] \\ \text{QUALIA} = \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{CONST} = x \\ \text{FORMAL} = \text{displaced}(x) \\ \text{TELIC} = \text{arrive}(e_1, x, y) \\ \text{AGENT} = \text{flee}(e_2, x, z) \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right]$$

Note that this is a conceptual node, and not a label; this is indicated by the use of small capital letters. It is useful to provide the semantic structure for a conceptual node, as the specifications of that node are taken by any term that occupies that node on the conceptual hierarchy through the process of generalisation (cf. Chapter 5). Additionally, the hierarchy of all the terms (cf. §4.3) shows that the three terms inherit specifications from this basic level. The distinction between legitimate and illegitimate unexpected arrival is expressed by further specifications in the semantic structures of each. Legitimacy is generally, in this case, something endowed by some assessor, such as Australian Immigration, or the United Nations Human Rights Committee.

The semantic structure of the conceptual node LEGITIMATE UNEXPECTED ARRIVAL is explicated in (55).

$$(55) \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{LEGITIMATE UNEXPECTED ARRIVAL} \\ \text{ARGSTR} = \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{ARG}_1 = x:\text{human} \\ \text{S-ARG} = w:\text{organisation} \end{array} \right] \\ \text{EVENTSTR} = \left[ \begin{array}{l} e_1:\text{transition} \\ e_2:\text{state} \\ e_3:\text{transition} \\ e_4:\text{transition} \\ \text{RESTR} = e_3 < (e_1 < (e_2 \circ e_4)) \end{array} \right] \\ \text{QUALIA} = \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{CONST} = x \\ \text{FORMAL} = \text{recognise}(e_4, w, x) \wedge \text{displaced}(x) \\ \text{TELIC} = \text{arrive}(e_1, x, y) \wedge \text{wait}(e_2, x) \\ \text{AGENT} = \text{flee}(e_3, x, z) \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right]$$

This structure is evidenced by comments (56), (57) and (58).

- (56) e2-0498: Most genuine refugees have grown up in, and luckily survived through very difficult times. Anything they might meet in their “escape” is not necessarily a trauma to them, compared to what they (supposedly) left. However, for people brought up in relative safety and comfort in Australia, it is ONLY NATURAL that every “different” and “difficult” situation has a much more traumatic effect. And THAT, as intended by SBS and maybe others, extracts additional sympathy for ALL refugees, legal AND illegal, from the participants and the viewers!
- (57) e1-0875: I myself am from a country that produced asylum seekers in the past, although I have never been a refugee. [...] They have family here who sent them money to come over. *If anyone say they are running away from death and life situation, they should be prepared to wait for their processing to happen.* [...]
- (58) e2-0265: Would someone please tell Raquel that people seeking asylum are not

committing a crime? Article 31 of the Refugee Convention (to which Australia is a signatory) recognises that refugees have a lawful right to enter a country for the purposes of seeking asylum, regardless of how they arrive or whether they hold valid travel or identity documents. [...]

These comments demonstrate that the act of leaving must be in response to some form of persecution, and the arrival must be as a result of that act of leaving (hence why a strict partial order  $<$  is used in EVENTSTR). (57) shows that refugees who have waited in camps are more likely to be treated as legitimate than those who have not done this, hence the inclusion of  $e_2$  in the semantic structure; similarly, (58) is an example of an argument that a legitimate UA must be recognised as such, before being considered legitimate. I show in §4.2 that this term is generally represented by the label *refugee*.

The semantic structure of illegitimate unexpected arrival is

$$(59) \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{ILLEGITIMATE UNEXPECTED ARRIVAL} \\ \text{ARGSTR} = \left[ \text{ARG}_1 = x:\text{human} \right] \\ \text{EVENTSTR} = \left[ \begin{array}{l} e_1:\text{transition} \\ e_2:\text{transition} \\ \text{RESTR} = e_2 < e_1 \end{array} \right] \\ \text{QUALIA} = \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{CONST} = x \\ \text{FORMAL} = \text{displaced}(x) \\ \text{TELIC} = \text{arrive}(e_1, x, y) \\ \text{AGENT} = \text{leave}(e_2, x, z) \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right]$$

That which differentiates legitimate UA and illegitimate UA is that illegitimate UAs are not *fleeing* anything, but instead *leave*, for other reasons (the data indicate that these are mostly economic reasons). This key difference is articulated in (60), which is a typical example of the way this specification is expressed in the corpus.

- (60) e1-1143: I believe there are genuine refugees who have fled their countries from fear of murder or persecution. I am sorry for them. They are to be found in camps just across the border in neighbouring countries. That is where Australia should be taking its refugee intake from. Illegal immigrants to Australia are people cherry-picking where they would like to live from the point of view of economic advantage. They should not gain priority by doing this, over people who wait patiently for resettlement.

(60) suggests that refugees, in the general sense, must be ‘resettled’, and indicates the action of some third-party that determines ultimately what happens to the refugee, i.e., that their futures are not determined solely by their own actions.

This demonstrates a third party that acts to recognise the legitimacy of refugees (indicated in the FORMAL quale of (55) above), and that their legitimacy is heavily based on this recognition.

Observe that the semantic structure for illegitimate UA is far less specified, that is, has less semantic content, than that of legitimate UA. This suggests that legitimate UA is less likely to have any terms subordinate to it, with its semantic content being enough to assume that any further level of specificity would be nuanced meaning, or another term in the discourse that is not part of this analysis, while illegitimate UA is underspecified enough that it is possible that other terms be nested beneath it, as further specifications of its structure can be made.

These three structures raise the question of which is the default interpretation of the term *refugee*, that is, whether, in the default interpretation, *refugee* is considered legitimate or illegitimate. As discussed, the legitimacy of refugees is discussed with far less frequency than that of the other two terms, and in most cases in which it is, the distinction is generally made by highlighting illegitimate UA. We can therefore suggest that the default interpretation of the term *refugee* is legitimate UA. This is further discussed in §§4.2.1–4.2.2, where more evidence is given to support this hypothesis when *refugee* is compared with the other terms.

### 4.1.3 *Asylum seeker*

*Asylum seeker* displays many semantic similarities with illegitimate UA. There is less frequency of discussion regarding the legitimacy of asylum seekers, indicating that there is a default interpretation that is more common, and more established. From the data, it seems that the default interpretation is a negative one, as evidenced by the following comments.

- (61) e1-0650: I know this is a completely selfish way to think, but one of my main problems with asylum seekers is the fear that they will bring the problems of the country with them. Just like them, I dont want to live in a country that is filled with violence, war and poverty. How many of them can we take before the countries they are escaping from turn on us?
- (62) e1-0829: Yeah all very nice to focus on some individual asylum seekers but it's the overall effect of mass immigration that is problematic. I'm English and I've

seen what's happened there. Asylum seekers can get over \$50,000 a year in benefits for doing nothing. Halal meat is now sold everywhere, Muslims are attacking Jews, Hindus, Sikhs and Christians and Middle Eastern gangs are grooming young teenage girls into being sex slaves. What you have is just the beginning.

Comments (61) and (62) demonstrate the perception that *asylum seekers* bring problems from with them from their countries of origin. This does not directly indicate that they are illegitimate, but indicates that *asylum seeker* has a negative perception, which will be demonstrated in the qualia specifications, or the hierarchical structure. It must be observed that there are other comments that display a positive aspect of *asylum seeker*, such as comments (63) and (64).

(63) e2-0194: I thought that Gleny was the only one at the start of the experience with any empathy for asylum seekers and the only one with views on refugees similar to my own. [. . .] *And I am so sick of this attitude that an asylum seeker is "illegal" - they have not done anything illegal coming to Australia to seek asylum, whether it is on a plane or a boat!!!*

(64) e1-0086: Of course, as a documentary it should take an objective stance and not present an argument, but I find that the way it is shot elicits strange responses from people. We watched this at school today, and there were mixed reactions from people. Most were horrified at the stories the refugees had to tell, and were appalled at the unsanitary, inhumane conditions characteristic of an asylum seeker's lifestyle....However, A few students, me included, silently agreed with many of the 'test subject's' statements. Of course, we are perfectly tolerant of and sympathetic with *asylum seekers* – *we understand that many of them really have no choice but to flee for their lives*. The real problem is differentiating between those who are genuinely in need of help and those who want to take advantage of the Australian Government's extensive rewards program for all boatpeople. *Darren is quite right when he says genuine asylum seekers would stop at the nearest 'safe country', like Malaysia or Indonesia*

I would argue that comments such as (64) flag legitimacy or genuineness in order to achieve some semantic purpose, that is, in order to supercede the default interpretation with a more positive one; this particular comment achieves this by attempting to highlight the inevitability of their choice, as seen in the first highlighted sentence. This is an attempt to reverse that aspect which characterises illegitimacy, namely that the illegitimate UA chooses to leave, while the legitimate UA is forced to leave, as discussed above. The commenter in (63) appears to have a positive view of *asylum seeker*. While this appears to go against the semantics proper of the nominal, I will show in Chapter 5 that semantic shift of these three terms is possible, and is a

commonly used device.

Example (65) shows a case where the commenter is aware of the default interpretation, and they are consciously trying to supercede it. By not flagging a distinction between legitimate and illegitimate asylum seekers, and seemingly using the term as the basic-level interpretation of unexpected arrival, the author of (65) tries to assert a new interpretation of *asylum seeker*. This process of generalisation will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

- (65) e1-1022: How is it that so many people think that asylum seekers come to Australia on a whim? Who would risk their lives and their families to come here? It's because they have been tortured, persecuted and their lives put at risk in their own countries. Australians like these ignorant people on the show need to think about what motivates people to do this! Hurrah for this programme!

The CONST and FORMAL qualia are the same as those for *refugee*, according to the data. This suggests that they are inherited, while further specifications in the other two qualia suggest that *asylum seeker* is not the basic level; that is, *asylum seeker* is subordinate to *refugee*. The TELIC quale displays the same arrive event seen in that of *refugee*, and is evidenced in comments (61) and (63) above, parts of which are reprinted below.

- (66) e1-0650: I know this is a completely selfish way to think, but one of my main problems with asylum seekers is the fear that they will bring the problems of the country with them. [...]
- (67) e2-0194: [...] And I am so sick of this attitude that an asylum seeker is "illegal" - they have not done anything illegal coming to Australia to seek asylum, whether it is on a plane or a boat!!!

Additional specifications of the TELIC quale are an explicit expectation that asylum seekers will defraud Australia's welfare system, by unfairly claiming benefits.<sup>1</sup> This specification is seen in comment (68), and above in (62) (cf. p.43).

- (68) e1-0241: I would like to see a documentary based on an asylum seekers journey after they are granted residency in Australia. First stop Centrelink, next apply to bring family from country of origin, breed like rabbits, advise other asylum seekers on their entitlements, rely on Centrelink for decades, never work or contribute to this country but instead be a burden on the taxpayer. Yeah, I'd like to see that.

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<sup>1</sup>The teleology of arriving and draining state resources and cheating the welfare system is also present in the *refugee* qualia structure, but the comments occur with a much lower frequency; therefore, based on the data, this aspect is not a salient one.

I call this act *bludging*, after the Australian English term, which means to cheat the welfare system and live off it; this term is specified in the semantic structure of the term (cf. (72)).

Comments such as (69) below which display a positive teleology for *asylum seeker*; these comments are, however, few.

- (69) e2-0347: I think what the government fails to take into account is that refugees who are fortunate enough to be accepted by Australia, despite being perceived as a burden on the economy and our resources, will ultimately work hard to support the future of their children and future generations. [...] *These asylum seekers will ultimately work the jobs the Australians think they're too good for, and their children will, if they've learn enough from the experience, work hard at securing their own future because it is one that doesn't come easily.* If you have the humanity to help those in need, there will be future fruits of labour, even if it's not yet quantifiable.

The AGENT quale is almost identical to that of illegitimate UA, with a leave event instead of a flee one, or at least having the two as a strictly ordered pair, in which flee is more salient than leave. This is expressed by describing that Australia is not the first country entered by the asylum seekers, instead having passed through another country, and then coming to Australia. Comments (70) and (71) below show the most common way of expressing this quale that appears in the corpus; that is, sentiments such as those expressed in these commons appear regularly in the corpus, and serve to express the same semantic specification.

- (70) e2-0563: I think the producers need to not confuse their audience. The police raid in Malaysia managed to get more illegal immigrants than the "Chins". I migrated to Australia 8 years ago from Malaysia and I saw the people getting picked up from the police raid have green Indonesian passports in their possession. I feel sorry for the genuine asylum seekers but not for *illegal immigrants who did not come from war torn countries*. [...]
- (71) e1-0369: Umm doesn't it state that a genuine refugee must seek asylum in the NEAREST NON-HOSTILE COUNTRY.... which is clearly not Australia.... it could be Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt... the list goes on... therefore these people are NOT GENUINE ASYLUM SEEKERS.... they are CHOOSING to come here for various reasons (family here etc) and we barely have the infrastructure and resources to maintain our own population... and YES that goes to people who come by PLANE too

Both of these comments flag a difference between 'genuine asylum seekers,' who flee, and those who do not flee but choose to leave, which we can take to implicitly mean *asylum seekers*, as the opposite of *illegitimate asylum seekers*. We can make

this assumption based on the fact that the commenters do not use other terms, which they would if they were making a distinction between *asylum seeker* and, say, *refugee*, or *boat people*. The absence of either of these terms allows us to infer that the commenter is comparing *legitimate asylum seekers* with *illegitimate asylum seekers*.

The semantic structure of *asylum seeker* based on the data, therefore, is in (72).

$$(72) \left[ \begin{array}{l} \mathbf{asylum\ seeker} \\ \\ \text{ARGSTR} = \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{ARG}_1 = x:\text{human} \\ \text{S-ARG}_1 = y:\text{country} \\ \text{S-ARG}_2 = z:\text{country} \\ \text{S-ARG}_3 = w:\text{organisation} \end{array} \right] \\ \\ \text{EVENTSTR} = \left[ \begin{array}{l} e_1:\text{transition} \\ e_2:\text{state} \\ e_3:\text{transition} \\ e_4:\text{state} \\ \text{RESTR} = e_3 < (e_2 < (e_1 \circ e_5)) \end{array} \right] \\ \\ \text{QUALIA} = \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{CONST} = x \\ \text{FORMAL} = \text{displaced}(x) \\ \text{TELIC} = \langle \text{arrive}(e_1, x, y), \text{wait}(e_2, x), \text{bludge}(e_4, x, w) \rangle \\ \text{AGENT} = \langle \text{leave}(e_3, x, z_i), \text{flee}(e_3, x, z_i) \rangle \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right]$$

Note that the enumeration of this structure relies on the assumption that *leave* and *flee* are the same event, as they will most likely occur in complementary distribution; that is, it is not possible for  $x$  to *leave and flee* the same country. Because the two terms are differentiated in the manner of exiting the country, they are treated as the same  $e_3$  in the semantics of *asylum seeker*; this is not to say they are equivalent semantically, but is a way of ensuring that both events cannot occur in the same instantiation. Either is possible within the semantics of the nominal, but it is more likely that *leave* be referenced, because of the SAL, which also operates on the AGENT quale. The TELIC quale shows another SAL operation, which is important in distinguishing the semantic structure of *asylum seeker* from that of *boat people*, as the events in both are almost identical, except for their salience ordering. I emphasise that SAL does not exclude specifications, but instead makes certain specifications more salient to the meaning of the term than others.  $z_i$  appears in the AGENT quale to suggest that it is possible to i) flee from one country, find asylum in another and

choose to leave that second country for economic reasons; or ii) that it is possible to leave or flee from the country of origin.

#### 4.1.4 *Boat people*

Legitimacy of *boat people* is demonstrated explicitly in only two comments in the entire corpus.

- (73) e1-0105: Technically boat people are illegals if they come to Australia via safe harbour. To be counted as a genuine refugee you must stop at the first country of safe harbour. I watched this show and was incredibly moved by it. I have always been very pro immigration as Australia is what it is today as a result of the many cultures we have embraced. But we do need to have a fair and equal process by which we accept immigrants. Coming by boat is queue jumping as there are thousands of people trying to come through the correct channels and are missing out as a result of those who jump the queue. *We need to be firmer on how we deal with the boats and faster on processing legitimate refugees to make it less attractive to risk life and limb, and children's lives, coming by boat.* Leaving people languishing in camps is cruel. Having people come through legitimate channels will also shut those up who are trying to stop immigration as well as it will take the spoon that they bang away from them.
- (74) e1-1117: To me this is simple. If you are a legitimate refugee; and as long as you do not try to push to the front of the cue, you deserve to be considered. *If you illegally arrive in Australia on a boat;* you are not only forcing yourself on Australia, breaking our laws etc but you are also spitting in the face of the other refugees waiting in line to restart their life. Zero tolerance to Boat People. More tolerance to legitimate refugees!

The highlighted sentence in (73) shows an example of coordination of *legitimate refugee*, that is, legitimate UA, and *boat people*. It is impossible to coordinate an object and its superordinate: for example, the coordination ‘cats and mammals’ is impossible because the coordination infers that *cat* are outside of the category *mammal*, which is not the case. Similarly, to coordinate legitimate UA and *boat people* infers that the former is not superordinate to the latter, and indicates that *boat people* is subordinate to illegitimate UA. The highlighted clause in (74) reinforces an illegitimate reading, as the conditional clause presupposes that all boat people arrival illegally, and are therefore illegitimate. Furthermore, this is sharply contrasted to the clause before, which talks about an unexpected arrival awaiting their turn. It is clear from the lack of questions of legitimacy, and the assumption that *boat*

*people* are illegitimate expressed in comments (75) and (76) that the illegitimacy of *boat people* is determined in the semantics of the nominal, expressed in the AVM as inheritance from the illegitimate unexpected arrival's semantic structure (cf. (59)).

- (75) e2-0761: [...] unfortunately, everyone seems to think that all ppl who arrive in Oz on a boat are "genuine" refugees. since when? those who come on boats, pay money to smugglers, throw away there documentation so that they cannot be identified as whatever they were at home, and then expect to be granted 'refugee' status and re-settled, I don't think so! if we accept the 'genuine' refugees and not the 2% who are queue jumpers, then the country would be a much better place
- (76) e1-0941: I don't think they are the poorest people... 10K (what they paid to the smugglers) very good money even here. (at least for most of us) What gives the right to jump the legal refugee's cue? Just because they can afford it? And I don't question the people's hard life or story here... Just the method. Of course if we get close to anyone emotionally, hard to say no. But we have official authorities with set-up rules for decide who is eligible to come. Ps: the "documentarists" should make a part which made in the real refugee camps, who has no 10K dollar to pay the smugglers, lets see what we think about them...

The appearance of the term 'queue-jumper,' which is a term that is used often to refer to *boat people*, indicates that the waiting event is excluded from the TELIC quale. As indicated by these comments, the *wait* event is one that is very salient to the semantics of legitimate UA, and that if an unexpected arrival violates this specification, they are illegitimate. This strengthens the case that *boat people* is not subordinate to the legitimate UA concept node.

An observation that may seem obvious, but one that is also evidenced by the data, is that *boat people* are distinguished by the means they arrive, that is by boat. (77) and (78) demonstrate this.

- (77) e1-0594: Hi. I think it is important for everyone to remember here that 1) The family from Africa in this episode admitted that the refugee camp was terrible and they had no safety there 2) People often are facing death if they stay to find legitimate means to get to Australia and so flee. The other countries along the way, like the camp in Kenya are no better from where they fled. So should they stay to let their children and themselves die? That is their experience. So to say boat people are cue jumpers and taking places from others in camps like they are common criminals is unjust. First give people a safe means of waiting in another country and process people faster then they are now and maybe *people will not risk their lives on the boats*. Not everything is black and white.
- (78) e1-0176: While I have found the documentary very enlightening, it strengthens my feelings that we should stop *boat people from coming*. *Those poor people in refugee*

*camps don't have the chance of ever making it to Australia, as they simply can't afford the fee paid to smugglers. Every person that arrives by boat takes one of the 13,500 spots we have available for refugees, they get that spot because they paid up and I don't think that's fair. We should make sure the most needy and the ones that have waited the longest come first (such as people in camps in Malaysia & Kenya), not only the ones who can afford the trip down. [...]*

One could argue that this aspect is a further specification of the arrive event, present in the TELIC of both *refugee* and *asylum seeker*. However, based on Pustejovsky's definition of the FORMAL quale, that is, "that which distinguishes an object in a larger domain" (Pustejovsky, 1995: 76), I would argue that this further specification is present in the FORMAL quale, as it specifies a certain kind of unexpected arrival, and distinguishes that kind from other types, such as those that arrive by plane, or are transferred to Australia by refugee agencies.

The AGENT quale displays more similarities with *refugee* than *asylum seeker*, as there are more instances of commenters suggesting that, because their lives are in danger (cf. (79)), it is understandable that they saw arriving by boat as the only way to safety.

(79) e3-0335: Hey guys, i was a refugee, who now lives in Australia. I moved here in 1994 after staying at an Indonesian refugee camp for 5 years. My family, minus my father (ie. my mother and 4 young children, i was 8months), initially came to Malaysia, we stayed there for 10 days before we got deported like those people who were caught in the program (ie. put on a rickety boat and told to go that way to Indonesia). It took over 2 months of "travel" from Vietnam to Indonesia. And many many boats sank, luckily ours did not. My mother has told me some horrific stories of what she has been through, it wasn't easy. But still, let me tell you guys, *when you're fighting for your life, there is no queue*. My family had to wait for 5 years, but even then, *i completely understand why people would go on a boat*. Just like "boat people" and "people smuggler", the term "queue jumping is stupid. There are humans involved, always remember. HUMANS, not boat people.

(80) e1-0614: I watched the 1st episode today and understood that this is just a pre-meditate story but couldn't stand the story that did not reflect 100% of the dangerous emotionally and physically of escaping on a tiny little boat on the way to freedom. As one of the many thousands of Vietnamese boat people, I had experienced the trauma, not just one journey but many many times travelling on a cramped like sardines tiny wooden boat starting when I was only 12. We all understood that the chance of dying on the sea is far greater than reaching our freedom but it's worth the risk. My parents understood that they might not never see their son again but we all hoped for the best although it's a very slim chance. I was even escaping to Cambodia then to Thailand not one but twice. Twice we're being pushed back out to the sea. However, that did not stop my determination of escaping the Commu-

nist to freedom. Nobody wanted to leave their own country or their loved ones. All we're looking for is freedom.

This suggests that to flee is more salient in the qualia structure of *boat people* than it is in *asylum seeker*. There are comments that contradict this suggestion, and that place *boat people* in the same category as *asylum seeker*, as economic refugees that wish to gain entry into the country for economic rather than safety reasons. Despite this, it is more common to express sympathy for boat people, because it is assumed that they would not come here were it not for the situation in their countries of origin, or other countries passed through. This suggests that *boat people* is not inheriting its semantic structure directly from *asylum seeker* (discussed further in §4.2.3). An additional distinction that is made in the comments is that *boat people* are often assumed to have paid a large sum of money to be brought to Australia by ‘people smugglers’; this amount was given in the programme as AU\$10,000, and this is therefore the dollar amount most often quoted. This is distinct to *asylum seeker*, where this suggestion is not made in the data. Cf. comments (78), (75), and (76) for examples where this aspect is highlighted. This is expressed in the FORMAL quale for the same reason as *arrive\_by\_boat*, namely because it specifies the term in a larger domain. The semantic structure of *boat people* is displayed in (81).

$$(81) \left[ \begin{array}{l} \mathbf{boat\ people} \\ \text{ARGSTR} = \left[ \text{ARG}_1 = x:\text{human} \right] \\ \text{EVENTSTR} = \left[ \begin{array}{l} e_1:\text{transition} \\ e_2:\text{transition} \\ e_3:\text{process} \\ \text{RESTR} = e_2 \circ e_3 < e_1 \end{array} \right] \\ \text{QUALIA} = \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{CONST} = x \\ \text{FORMAL} = \text{displaced}(x), \text{arrive\_by\_boat}(e_1, x, y), \text{pay}(e_3, x, w) \\ \text{TELIC} = \text{arrive}(e_1, x, y) \\ \text{AGENT} = \langle \text{flee}(e_2, x, z_i), \text{leave}(e_2, x, z_i) \rangle \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right]$$

#### 4.1.5 Summary

This section has examined a number of comments, and extrapolated the semantic structures of each term, as well as the conceptual nodes unexpected arrival, legitimate UA and illegitimate UA. It is important to note that the comments included in

this analysis are not the only comments that were consulted, but were illustrative examples. These structures infer certain inheritance paths, and the terms' use together reveals more about the semantics of the terms; this aspect will now be analysed.

## 4.2 Analysis of the relationships between the terms

The overall trend in use of the terms together in one utterance is in order to endow *asylum seeker* and *boat people*, those terms with a default illegitimate interpretation, with legitimacy, or vice versa. It is more common that the commenter conflate two terms, using, for example, a conjunction, as in comments (82), which demonstrates the use of *asylum seeker* with *refugee* in order to coerce the legitimacy of the prior term to that of the latter.

- (82) e1-0041: [...] It seems that everyone has the same basic human compassion and belief that no one should be subject to violence, torture or homelessness, and this program has shown that story telling can provide a level of personal understanding and education that most media cannot. In the same way that a minister can change his mind about gay marriage because his son or daughter is gay, ordinary Australians can *change their minds about asylum seekers and refugees through story telling on a personal level*. It is too easy to be disconnected to and judgmental of those we don't know or understand.

It is possible to argue that the commenter was trying to cover the whole semantic space of unexpected arrival, by using an example of both a legitimate and illegitimate UA. However, because of the sentiments expressed earlier in the comment, and because of the use of a conjunction that serves to conflate them, this comment is seen as trying to coerce the legitimacy of *asylum seeker* to that of *refugee*. Compare this with comment (83), which shows a disjunction between the terms, more strongly covering the semantic space of both types of UA.

- (83) e2-0407: I would rather have any refugee, boat person, anybody that is willing to work for a living in this country. This young girl in this show that doesn't work, she is on the dole, and I am paying for her! I am paying for this young ignorant bludger! *I find her more offensive than any boat person or refugee*.

A conjunction of two of the terms is used to coerce an illegitimate reading of *refugee*, using the term with the others to achieve this end. Comments (84) and

(85) are examples which not only have a conjunction of this type, but also very explicitly reference negative qualities, and attach these to *refugee*.

(84) e1-0879: Why don't they show some violent refugees/boat people.. How do you know 60 on the boat aren't fresh from Stoning a woman on the street? Woudn't want to get in an argumentwith them if they turned out to be my neighbour!.

(85) e1-0656: I felt manipulated by the show. I do not think that the *asylum seekers/refugees* picked for the show are representative of the ones that are causing concern in Australian society. How about showing the radical refugees/migrants that want to change the face of Australia through intoducing sharia law or those that simply don't want to integrate. [...]

The slash in these when the commenter refers to “refugees/boat people” in (84) and “asylum seekers/refugees” in (85) equates the two terms, and, considering coercion from the adjective *violent* in the former comment, and the predicate that they are “causing concern” in the latter, serves to remove any differentiation between them, and thereby coerce the legitimacy of *refugee* to that of either *boat people* or *asylum seeker*. This is contrasted with conjunctions using “and”, which can be either an attempt to cover the entire semantic space of unexpected arrival, by giving examples of legitimate and illegitimate UAs (cf. §4.2.1 for examples of these), or, in a similar way to the slash notation, coerce the legitimacy of one term to that of the other.

I will now discuss the terms and their specific usages together, by examining each combination in turn.

#### 4.2.1 *Refugee and asylum seeker*

These terms appear in conjunction with higher frequency than other combinations of the terms. This suggests that one is not superordinate to another, as to conjoin two terms of different levels would violate hierarchical rules, as discussed; instead, it suggests that they are either on different levels of the hierarchy, and share some common parent node, but are not directly related to one another, or that they are on a coordinate level. Examples of their usage together include (86) and (87).

(86) e3-0044: I feel that their "experience" was not deep enough. Having worked with *refugees and asylum seekers* in Europe as well as in a camp in Africa, I know that what these people experienced in nowhere close to what refugees go through. They are shocked by the experience, and it has just been a toned down soft version of what

refugees go through, of what camp life is like, of what fearing for one's life is like. I wish the experiment had been pushed further.

- (87) e2-0051: This show really is great and gives us a small viewing point to witness some of the hardships which *asylum seekers and refugees* endure. [...]

These demonstrate the usage of *refugee* as a legitimate term, and an attempt to coerce the meaning of *asylum seeker* to include the legitimate aspect. This is achieved by referring to their common experiences, as in (87), “the hardships which asylum seekers and refugees endure, or, in the case of (86) that they are found in the same situations, i.e., “in Europe, as well as in a camp in Africa”. Both of these examples use these techniques to supercede the default illegitimate interpretation of *asylum seeker*, as suggesting that they go through the same trials as *refugees*, which are considered legitimate. Because these comments demonstrate refugees in refugee camps, or undergoing hardships, these display a legitimate reading, rather than a negative reading of *asylum seeker* in an attempt to coerce the legitimacy of *refugee*. Other than comments that are similar to those in (87) and (86), there are many instances of usages that appear to show attempts by the commenter to cover the complete semantic space of unexpected arrival, by giving an example of both a legitimate and illegitimate UA. This style of conjunction is demonstrated in comments (88) and (89). Specifically, these comments show an example of two conjunctions, ‘and’ and ‘or’, that achieve the same semantic end, by not precisely equivocating the terms, but by using them as examples of the legitimate and illegitimate UA categories.

- (88) e3-0032: I can tell you all this is the sort of stuff Australia and other countries who have issues with *asylum seekers or refugees* to look in to, some times you got to view the book before you judge it by what you see on the cover, i know many people are lazy and some are eager to find out answers, how did this people really came in to this position? why are they here? what drove them here?? what is the story behind their lives??? well really i have thank my teacher for showing me this video i think its educating.

- (89) e2-0589: SBS ... you have done it again ...tonight's program was one of the best I have ever seen in dealing with the issue of *refugees and asylum seekers*. To understand the reasons behind the asylum seekers phenomena, we need to look into the root causes of the issue and try to understand what makes a person take so much risk!!!! That's exactly what this program is successfully doing. SBS you got us talking and really communicating with open minds ... CONGRATULATIONS!

Comments that exhibit a contrastive usage of these terms together in a meaningful way are difficult to find. This suggests that the main distinction between the terms is one of legitimacy, and that finer-grained comparisons are not needed. This, and inheritance of specifications in the qualia of the two terms, suggest that *refugee* is subordinate to legitimate UA, while *asylum seeker* is subordinate to illegitimate UA. The structure suggested is found in Figure 4.1.

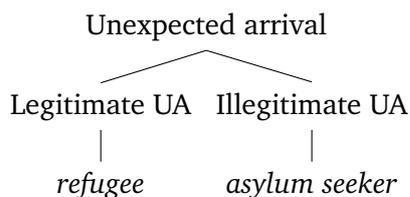


Figure 4.1: The hierarchy including *refugee* and *asylum seeker*

#### 4.2.2 *Refugee and boat people*

These two terms appear with less frequently together, but appear to be used to achieve the same semantic ends as that of using *asylum seeker* and *refugee*, namely of either coercing the legitimacy of one to the other, as in (86), or to cover the complete semantic space of unexpected arrival by using *boat people* as the term for illegitimate UA, as in (90).

- (90) e3-1088: I have just come back to Australia from a two month holiday in Africa, Kenya. I am a Mzungu (white man) married to an African lady. My tears flowed from my eyes watching this program. I just hope all those people out there that see *boat people and refugees* as lesser people, watch this program and I hope you will be enlightened not to think this way again. [...]
- (91) e3-0795 I have always admired Malcolm Frazer for speaking out against governing politicians policies regarding the plight of *asylum seekers and refugees*. I never once for a minute believed the "Children Overboard" propagander spun by the former Howard government to win the federal election of that year and I blame that event for the populace negative attitudes surrounding the plight of refugees in this country. [...]

There are also examples of equivocation of the terms, found, for example, in (92), by using a slash, and in novel way in(93), by suggesting that the labels are essentially interchangeable for the concept, and that there is no real difference for

what they signify. In this example, both of the terms would be generalised to the basic-level unexpected arrival.

- (92) e2-0069: You should really have stayed at school....and now, you should really get a job...I hate the fact that I pay taxes for people like you to bludge. I would rather pay higher taxes to fund a greater intake of boat people/refugees.
- (93) e3-0181: Do the producers of this series realise what a powerful tool they have? I have now totally changed my view of *boat people*, *refugees*, whatever you like to call them. Every politician, student and citizen of Australia should be made to view this series. I am ashamed of our country. We have a lot of space. Let them in. Let them do the jobs that we as Australians think we are too good to do such as cleaning toilets.

Examples are also found of contrastive use, such as (78) on p.49, part of which is reprinted in (94). This usage contrasts *refugees*, “those poor people in refugee camps” with *boat people*, who can “afford the fee paid to smugglers”. This usage is, as with *asylum seeker* and *refugee*, rare in the corpus. This is because such fine-grained comparisons generally only occur when two terms have a closer semantic structure, and are distinguished by less, as is the case with *asylum seeker* and *boat people*.

- (94) e1-0176: While I have found the documentary very enlightening, it strengthens my feelings that we should stop boat people from coming. Those poor people in refugee camps don’t have the chance of ever making it to Australia, as they simply can’t afford the fee paid to smugglers. [...]

These comments show a usage that is similar to *asylum seeker*; in the case of usage with *refugee*, *boat people* is semantically distinguished by very little. That is, it is used as a term for the concept illegitimate UA. This indicates a split in the hierarchical structure similar to that of *asylum seeker* and *refugee*, which is reflected in the hierarchy in Figure 4.2. This structure is further evidenced by the semantic

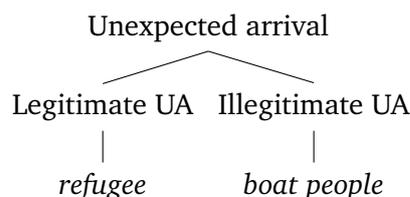


Figure 4.2: The hierarchy including *refugee* and *boat people*

structure of *boat people* above, which shows that there is nothing inherited from *Legitimate UA*, but instead has specifications inherited from *Illegitimate UA* (cf., for example, the TELIC quale). Furthermore, similarities between the semantic specificities of *boat people* and *asylum seeker* suggest that they share a superordinate node, i.e., illegitimate unexpected arrival.

### 4.2.3 *Asylum seeker and boat people.*

These two terms, because of their semantic similarity, are used very rarely together in the data, and only occur in one comment in the corpus.

- (95) e3-0824: People like Brad (22:49) is what is wrong with our country- his comment has shown the obsession far too many Australians have with only trying to protect what we have instead of doing the humanitarian thing and reaching out to help fellow human beings that need our help. There sadly is far too many an Australian that would welcome a return to the bad old days of the White Australian policy. Most Australians have fantastic hearts, and I hope this show has opened their eyes to see just a tiny piece of what pain and suffering their is on our world. We live in a wonderful democratic society and in peace and if we can help others escape the terrible situations they find themselves in, we should. That is not to say that we should throw open the doors and let everyone and anyone in- but as a very lucky country there is far more that we can and should be doing. Fantastic work SBS - it is good to see some parts of the media presenting the other side of the asylum seeker/boat people story.s

This indicates that, when comparisons are made, there is little use in comparing or contrasting the two terms, as they are semantically similar, on the level of comparison of the terms. Note that in (95), they are used in a way that suggests an equivalence of the terms, by way of the slash notation, and also demonstrates that they are considered negative by users of the terms, because of the programme showing “the other side” of the story, that is, a positive side. It follows, then, that they are coordinate terms, and suggests that they have the same superordinate term, an hierarchical relation that is evidenced by the inheritance of semantic specifications. The hierarchy suggested by this usage is in Figure 4.3. These two terms are differentiated by a few different aspects. *Boat people* has the specification of a pay event in the FORMAL quale, whereby *boat people* pay a fee to a ‘people smuggler’, who trafficks large numbers of unexpected arrivals by boat to Australia. This is not present in *asylum seeker*, according to the data, with all suggestions of such payment made

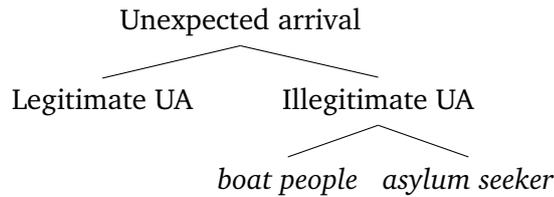


Figure 4.3: The hierarchy including *boat people* and *asylum seeker*

only in connection with the term *boat people*. Additionally, *asylum seeker* has the `bludge` specification; this is not included in the semantic structure of *boat people*, as it is not as often articulated in the data. While there are comments that indicate such a specification, it is often seen as their entitlement, and seen as more positive than that of *asylum seeker*. This is, I believe, connected to the most surprising differentiation between the terms, namely the ordering of specifications in the TELIC quale, where `flee` and `leave` are present in each structure, but have different orders of salience in each. While *boat people* flee from some sort of danger, *asylum seekers* are more likely, in terms of salience, to leave, and therefore do not deserve the same state benefits and welfare that *boat people* do. These distinctions are found more frequently articulated when either of the terms *boat people* or *asylum seeker* are compared with *refugee*, and are articulated in nuanced ways: cf. comments (60), (76), and (94) on pages 42, 49, and 56, respectively, for examples of these usages.

### 4.3 Hierarchy of terms

The conjunction of the hierarchies is given in Figure 4.4. This hierarchy is evidenced

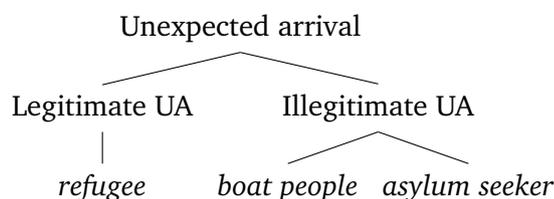


Figure 4.4: The complete hierarchy including all terms

by the semantic structures explicated above, by the various aspects that appear as a result of inheritance, and is an amalgamation of the three hierarchies above.

The semantic structures of each of the terms, (55), (72), and (81), and the hierarchy, Figure 4.4, provide insights into the specific usages of these three commonly-used terms, and are evidenced by their usage in the data. But the question of whether these semantic structures represent the reality of the situation of unexpected arrivals remains. This question, as well as some other implications of the findings presented in this chapter such as generalisation of the terms, will be explored in the following chapter.

## Chapter 5

# Discussion

This chapter will focus on the implications of this study for the GL framework, will demonstrate generalisation of the terms within the hierarchical structure, and discuss implications of these semantic structures for the public discourse, and their usages therein.

The GL framework has, throughout this study, shown its robustness in representing the semantic structures of terms that are politically problematic, and therefore subject to varied usage. It makes provisions for capturing comprehensive representations of the semantics of nominals, which, far from being static, allow for meaning change through sense selection and such phenomena as generalisation to occur, through its generative devices, which will be important in this chapter, and its way of specifying the semantic structures of words. Certain limitations were also shown, specifically for an analysis in the style of this study; for this reason, SAL was introduced when the data indicated that the terms *asylum seeker* and *boat people* are semantically close. This allowed a finer-grained approach to the semantics of each term, by allowing a distinction to be made that would have otherwise been impossible to represent. In this way, it allows for a much more complete representations of the semantics of these two terms. Take, for example, the three dictionary definitions provided in §2.4, on p.22 which were not internally consistent, and contradicted themselves. The entry for *refugee* stated that a refugee is “someone who flees for refuge or safety, especially to a foreign country. . .”, while the entry for *asylum seeker* asserts that an asylum seeker is “a person who has applied for asylum

in a country not their own and who is awaiting the determination of his or her status as a refugee” (Butler, 2009). These definitions are contradictory, insofar as a *refugee* is someone who has fled, while an *asylum seeker* is someone who has fled, but is awaiting refugee status. There is, therefore, no distinction between the two, based on these minimally specified definitions. This highlights the drawbacks of an SEL (cf. §2.1), and the way in which the GL approach allows a more comprehensive, more complete, and internally consistent semantics of these three terms. The present study is the first to use the GL to analyse terms that are politically problematic, and, as such contributes to the field by demonstrating that the framework is robust enough for this style of analysis, and by defining additional tools and devices that can be used to extend the GL framework.

The structure indicated in the previous chapter, reproduced in Figure 5.1, will be called the ‘standard structure’.

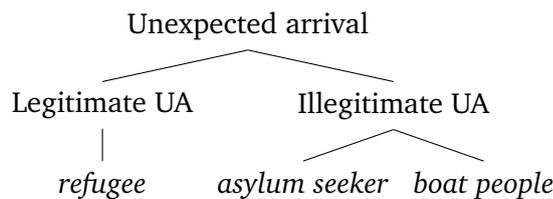


Figure 5.1: The standard structure

The geometry of the standard structure indicates that none of the terms is subordinate or superordinate to any other, but instead are differentiated by various distinctions. This is an important observation. It has important implications for the claim made by O’Doherty and Lecouteur (2007: 7) that “these labels [*refugee*, *asylum seeker*, and *boat people*] were [in their data] used in an apparently interchangeable way.” While the analysis of the phenomenon of generalisation will ultimately support this claim, my analysis importantly highlights that each term has its own, clear semantic meaning which interacts in context with others, to produce the semblance of interchangeability. By presenting a more comprehensive picture of the semantics of the three terms, we see that they are used in nuanced, and sometimes purposeful, contexts that serve to achieve certain purposes. These contexts, I will show, seem

random because of operations of type coercion and selective binding that cause the terms to generalise, that is, cause the labels in the hierarchy to label superordinate terms. However, each term carries its own semantic weight, and this necessarily entails that each is viewed as a term related to but independent of the others. Because of the independence of each of the terms, the claim that the categorisation of individuals into these terms is problematic, instead of the semantics proper of each term, is challenged. The distinction between illegitimate UA and legitimate UA seems quite obvious to speakers, and there are therefore more comparisons made between *refugee* and *asylum seeker*, and *refugee* and *boat people*. In the case of *asylum seeker* and *boat people*, the distinction is minimal. This is not to say that they can be considered interchangeable, and neither can they be considered in complementary distribution. Rather, this evidences the idea that they are distinct, and are distinguished by an ordering SAL of the events in the AGENT quale, as well as some other semantic specifications, such as the pay event present in *boat people*, and the bludge event in *asylum seeker*. This supports the intuitive idea that they are closely related terms, which we find evidenced by the lack of comparisons, both negative and positive, made of the terms.

The standard structure will seem counterintuitive, for various reasons. Some usages of both *refugee* and *asylum seeker* show considerable deviation from those usages indicated in the hierarchy; that is, there appears to be a trend of generalising subordinate terms to occupy unnamed superordinate nodes. Possible reasons for speakers performing generalisation have been discussed in Chapter 4; coercion of the legitimacy of one term to another, equivalence of two terms to achieve this end, or in order to cover the entire semantic space of unexpected arrival, amongst others. The relationship between the conceptual node and its label *boat people*, conversely, appears to be much more strict, and the label does not appear to allow for generalisation of the term, except in the case of it being selected as the illegitimate UA label, and being generalised with *refugee* (cf. §4.2.2). This could be as a result of the clearer link to Australian English speakers between the term and that which it denotes, that is because the etymology of the term is fairly obvious, or perhaps because of the specificity of its semantic specifications; that is, because

the *arrive\_by\_boat* and *pay* events are specified, it is possible that it makes it less able to generalise, except in the instance described above. These speculative claims require more research to confirm. Generalisation occurs when certain relationships are entailed within the semantics of the utterance, which is generally achieved by comparing the terms and their relationships, or by using a term in such a way that neither the legitimate or illegitimate aspects or connotations of the term are present. That is, using the term in such a way that it becomes equivalent with the basic-level term unexpected arrival. It is analogous to a kind of movement, however it is not necessarily the case that the term completely moves from its original hierarchical position; that is, it is possible for a label to represent two conceptual nodes in the hierarchy at one time. We consider these usages nonstandard, as they go against the majority usages of the terms, the structures resulting from which are explicated in the previous chapter. There is evidence throughout the corpus that generalising to achieve certain semantic purposes is present, albeit infrequent.

As mentioned, a number of generalisation operations were seen in Chapter 4, specifically in §4.2. Consider (93) on p.56, reprinted in part in (96).

- (96) e3-0181: [...] I have now totally changed my view of boat people, refugees, whatever you like to call them. [...] Let them in. Let them do the jobs that we as Australians think we are too good to do such as cleaning toilets.

This comment was specifically flagged as an instance of generalisation, where *boat people* and *refugee* are generalised to the basic-level unexpected arrival node. By stripping both of the terms of their specificity, the commenter refers to the general category, unexpected arrival, by using them in conjunction, and referring to the general category as *them*. This generalisation is represented in Figure 5.2. While

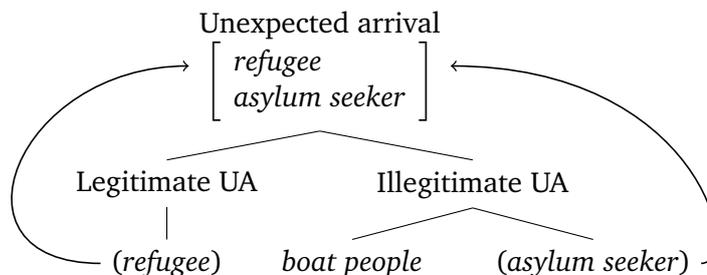


Figure 5.2: Generalisation of *refugee* and *boat people* to unexpected arrival

this may seem like a complex generalisation operation, it is a simple one, and similar styles of generalisation are exhibited in other comments; cf. (88) and (89) on p.54, and (92) on p.56. Generalisation of this kind can also occur when no comparison is performed, as demonstrated in comment (97).

(97) e1-0086: [...] Most were horrified at the stories the refugees had to tell, and were appalled at the unsanitary, inhumane conditions *characteristic of an asylum seeker's lifestyle*....However, A few students, me included, silently agreed with many of the 'test subject's' statements. Of course, we are perfectly tolerant of and sympathetic with asylum seekers -- we understand that many of them really have no choice but to flee for their lives. The real problem is differentiating between those who are genuinely in need of help and those who want to take advantage of the Australian Government's extensive rewards program for all boatpeople. Darren is quite right when he says genuine asylum seekers would stop at the nearest 'safe country', like Malaysia or Indonesia

While this comment does reference the other two terms, it presents *asylum seeker* as the basic level unexpected arrival by suggesting that there are “those who are genuine in need of help, and those who want to take advantage.” This indicates that the illegitimate/legitimate distinction occurs below the term, and entails that *asylum seeker* acts as a label for unexpected arrival, illustrated in the hierarchy in Figure 5.3.

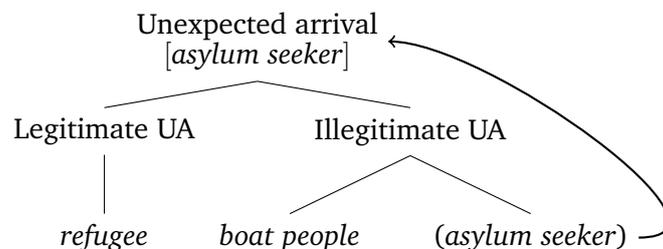


Figure 5.3: Hierarchy showing generalisation of *asylum seeker*

Other comments display generalisation to the basic-level without comparison in a different way.

(98) e3-0109: [...] Also, I felt a little uncomfortable about watching human beings suffering in the way that was revealed. Seeing people at their most vulnerable, terrified and at the mercy of the authorities was far too much for me, because we couldn't really do anything about it; *despite the fact that we know the conditions that asylum seekers have to endure*. [...]

- (99) e1-0814: Well done SBS for showing a true picture of what it is to be an asylum seeker coming to Australia. Hoepfully, it will open the eyes of some Australians who probably have an unsympathetic view of asylum seekers. Again, the number of people coming to Australia pales into insignificance in comparison to other countries. I can't wait for tomorrow's episode now!!

Comments (98) and (99) show examples where the term *asylum seeker* has neither a positive nor negative connotation, that is, neither a legitimate nor illegitimate interpretation, but instead uses them as the basic level term, by not indicating a distinction between it and either of the other terms. This transformation of *asylum seeker* into a basic term seems to be different from the way of moving *refugee* to the superordinate position; that is, it appears that it is more common to contrast *refugee*-as-basic with its subordinates than it is for *asylum seeker*-as-basic.

More complex types of generalisation can also be found in the corpus, such as comment (100), which contains two instances of generalisation.

- (100) e1-0438: Apart from the traditional owners all Australians are boat people in one form or another. *Any argument against refugees and in particular genuine asylum seekers must boil down to racism and xenophobia.* We are a fortunate country who can and should do more to help these people and more of these people. [...]

The first instance of generalisation is indicated by the phrase *in particular*. A certain hierarchical relationship is inferred, namely that *asylum seeker* is subordinate to *refugee*, that is legitimate UA, which is not the case in the standard hierarchy. The structure inferred by this comment is shown in Figure 5.4.

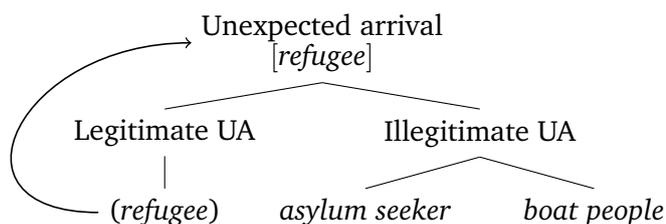


Figure 5.4: Generalisation of *refugee* to the conceptual node unexpected arrival

The term *asylum seeker* therefore becomes a subordinate of *refugee*, as the latter represents the conceptual node unexpected arrival. The other two terms, therefore, become subordinate to it; we can say, therefore, that, in this instance, *refugee* and *asylum seeker* act as specified types of *refugee*, making it possible for this hierarchy

to be inferred by intuition. Indeed, a similar hierarchy was given as an illustrative example in §2.5.

The second instance of generalisation occurs with the term *asylum seeker*, and, by adding the adjective *genuine*, we can infer that the speaker meant for the term to move across to a position either on or subordinate to the *Legitimate UA* node. These two instances of generalisation be conflated, creating the structure in Figure 5.5.

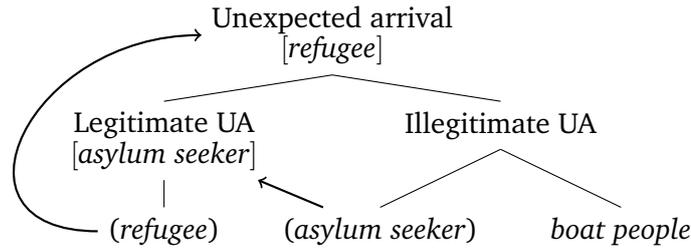


Figure 5.5: Hierarchy exhibiting generalisation of both *refugee* and *asylum seeker*

The following comments exhibit similar generalisation of the term *refugee* to the *Unexpected arrival* node.

- (101) e1-0174: After seeing exactly how *refugees (both legal and non-legal)* are treated in Malaysia, how can the Australian Government think shipping asylum seekers back there is any sort of solution?
- (102) e1-0085: [...] Most of us had for-fathers who did to the indigenous people what some of us are doing to 'refugees'. Australia has an aging population we need population growth. *The amount of refugees, in particular 'boat people' is very small.* [...]

(102) moves *refugee* in a very similar fashion to (100) above, by positioning that *boat people* is a more specific type of *refugee*, indicating a subordinate relationship to it, and (101) also performs this generalisation by entailing that both *Illegitimate UA* and *Legitimate UA* are subordinate to it. More surprising still are instances where *asylum seeker* is used to label the conceptual node *unexpected arrival*, as in the comment (97).

The generalisation operation is allowed in the GL framework because of the generative devices type coercion and selective binding (cf. §2.1.7), which allow two formally incongruent terms to be used together, and for each to affect the other's semantic structure. In Figure 5.5, we see an example where *asylum seeker* undergoes

selective binding. The term has a default illegitimate reading, but is then used with the adjective *genuine*; in other semantic frameworks, such as SELs, this would result in a semantic error, which could only be rectified by creating another entry in the lexicon for a *genuine asylum seeker*. Instead, as a result of the selective binding operation, the term can generalise, and much more elegantly describe the semantic shift presented in some comments, which is represented in the hierarchical structure of the labels and their relations to the conceptual nodes. The other generative device discussed in §2.1.7, type coercion, appears, for example, in comment (99). *Asylum seeker* is generalised to occupy the superordinate node, by the user underspecifying its semantic content. Through underspecification, the term is ‘stripped’ of its defining specifications, and thereby generalises. The stripping of semantic specification, where the term would otherwise produce a type error, is an example of type coercion. This is especially present in those examples provided for the generalisation exhibited in Figure 5.2. Generalisation, then, provides a useful way of explaining why the hierarchy may be counterintuitive to native speakers, despite their usage of the terms, insofar as it provides a mechanism by which the hierarchy can be suited to the needs and semantic ends of the user, and this is well supported by evidence in the corpus. As suggested, a possible motive for using *asylum seeker* in the place of unexpected arrival is to, for example, strip the semantics of *asylum seeker* to that of unexpected arrival, which does not contain those specifications that cause the default illegitimate interpretation, such as the leave event. This allows the speaker to avoid those prejudices that *asylum seeker* has gained over time, or perhaps to use the term in a novel way that will serve to demonstrate their argument more effectively.

The semantic structures and hierarchy presented in this thesis might seem counterintuitive to native speakers, especially depending on their political views. The research done in this study shows that generalisation and the GL’s generative devices affect the way in which speakers use the terms, and shows how the speakers perceive those categories which are labeled with the three terms analysed. However, does the psychological reality match the reality of the situation? Australian Department of Immigration statistics (Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2012) state that 83.3% of Irregular Maritime Arrivals, equivalent to the term *boat people*,

were granted visas in the 2009–10 financial year, while 62.8% were granted visas in the 2010–11 financial year (more prudent to this study, as it is the period in which *Go Back* was originally aired). Compare this with acceptance rates for unexpected arrivals who arrived by other means (i.e. *refugees* and *asylum seekers*) of 51.0% and 43.7% for the 2009–10 and 2010–11 financial years, respectively. This indicates that a higher proportion of *boat people* are legitimate unexpected arrivals, while the other two categories are less likely to be legitimate. This is contrary to what their usages indicate, and shows that the psychological categories inferred by the terms are not reliable, and are, in a major sense, incorrect. The implications of this for public discourse on the issue are manifold: the most surprising conclusion is that the terms themselves serve to skew public discourse on the issue, and allow for inferences about the people referred to by these terms, when the reality of the situation *per se* does not allow for such inferences to be made. The terms themselves, therefore, condition the discourse, in their present semantic form. It also means that speakers have to work harder to avoid these prejudices inherited from the structures of the terms. It is perhaps due to the semantics of the terms themselves that motivates the negative attitude towards unexpected arrivals that is evidenced throughout the corpus. This is also evidenced by SBS's rationale for having made the programme *Go Back*, which is an attempt to present the facts of unexpected arrivals to a group that is largely against them.

As discussed, the motivations for speakers' use of the generalisation operation are largely speculative, other than those explicated here, such as coercion of legitimacy, generalisation to the basic-level, and so on. Further study into the terms' usages in different media, such as those discussed in §2.5, namely political speeches from Parliamentary transcriptions or media texts, will further explicate the motivation and nature of the generalisation operation on these particular terms. The semantics of each term will also benefit from such a study. A further possible study is one of historical usages of these terms, especially *asylum seeker* and *boat people*, in order to see whether these terms have always been endowed with an illegitimate default interpretation, or whether this is a recent trend, and what the genesis of this trend was.

# Appendix A

## List of comments

Below are the comments that were included in the thesis, in their full forms. They are arranged according to numerical order.

e1-0041: What an amazing series. I have always wondered how some Australians can have such little compassion for the people in our world who are so desperate to have safety and freedom that they risk their lives and the lives of their families, only to be put in the same situation by our government. Finally, maybe some of these people can begin to change their minds as a result of a bit of education. It seems that everyone has the same basic human compassion and belief that no one should be subject to violence, torture or homelessness, and this program has shown that story telling can provide a level of personal understanding and education that most media cannot. In the same way that a minister can change his mind about gay marriage because his son or daughter is gay, ordinary Australians can change their minds about asylum seekers and refugees through story telling on a personal level. It is too easy to be disconnected to and judgmental of those we don't know or understand.

e1-0048: Thank you SBS for sparking such great discussion on this topic. From viewing the hundreds of comments on this website I think the one thing we can all agree on is that we are so lucky to live in a country where freedom of speech can be expressed. Many of the refugees seen on this show don't have this basic human right. This show has shown that problem is not just about refugees, it's about people living in despair, people that don't have the rights that all humans deserve but most importantly it's about people who need our help.

e1-0085: Understanding, Compassion, Tolerance - aren't these 'Australian'? Most of us had for-fathers who did to the indigenous people what some of us are doing to 'refugees'. Australia has an aging population we need population growth. The amount of refugees, in particular 'boat people' is very small. Yes we need to be wary of opening flood-gates that potentially may burden on our economy however all of us need to be responsible for integration & assimilation for people fleeing atrocious situations & feel proud to welcome our fellow-man to make our world a tiny bit better.

e1-0086: Of course, as a documentary it should take an objective stance and not present an argument, but I find that the way it is shot elicits strange responses from people. We watched this at school today, and there were mixed reactions from people. Most were horrified at the stories the refugees had to tell, and were appalled at the unsanitary, inhumane conditions characteristic of an asylum seeker's lifestyle....However, A few students, me included, silently agreed with many of the 'test subject's' statements. Of course, we are perfectly tolerant of and sympathetic with asylum seekers – we understand that many of them really have no choice but to flee for their lives. The real problem is differentiating between those who are genuinely in need of help and those who want to take advantage of the Australian Government's extensive rewards

program for all boatpeople. Darren is quite right when he says genuine asylum seekers would stop at the nearest 'safe country', like Malaysia or Indonesia

e1-0105: Technically boat people are illegals if they come to Australia via safe harbour. To be counted as a genuine refugee you must stop at the first country of safe harbour. I watched this show and was incredibly moved by it. I have always been very pro immigration as Australia is what it is today as a result of the many cultures we have embraced. But we do need to have a fair and equal process by which we accept immigrants. Coming by boat is queue jumping as there are thousands of people trying to come through the correct channels and are missing out as a result of those who jump the queue. We need to be firmer on how we deal with the boats and faster on processing legitimate refugees to make it less attractive to risk life and limb, and children's lives, coming by boat. Leaving people languishing in camps is cruel. Having people come through legitimate channels will also shut those up who are trying to stop immigration as well as it will take the spoon that they bang away from them.

e1-106 – Congratulations to SBS on a fantastic program. It should be mandatory for all Australians to watch this. It's a pity not all could experience what refugees go through before arriving in Australia. I agree with Tara, we don't appreciate just how lucky we are and the pure freedom we have.

e1-0174: After seeing exactly how refugees (both legal and non-legal) are treated in Malaysia, how can the Australian Government think shipping asylum seekers back there is any sort of solution?

e1-0176: While I have found the documentary very enlightening, it strengthens my feelings that we should stop boat people from coming. Those poor people in refugee camps don't have the chance of ever making it to Australia, as they simply can't afford the fee paid to smugglers. Every person that arrives by boat takes one of the 13,500 spots we have available for refugees, they get that spot because they paid up and I don't think that's fair. We should make sure the most needy and the ones that have waited the longest come first (such as people in camps in Malaysia & Kenya), not only the ones who can afford the trip down. By the way, I was a refugee 20 yrs ago and was lucky enough to be brought here by Australia. It's ironic that so many people I know, who have also been refugees, feel the same way. We need to stop the boats and bring in the real desperate, they don't have a hope otherwise.

e1-0241 – I would like to see a documentary based on an asylum seekers journey after they are granted residency in Australia. First stop Centrelink, next apply to bring family from country of origin, breed like rabbits, advise other asylum seekers on their entitlements, rely on Centrelink for decades, never work or contribute to this country but instead be a burden on the taxpayer. Yeah, I'd like to see that. I would like to see a documentary based on an asylum seekers journey after they are granted residency in Australia. First stop Centrelink, next apply to bring family from country of origin, breed like rabbits, advise other asylum seekers on their entitlements, rely on Centrelink for decades, never work or contribute to this country but instead be a burden on the taxpayer. Yeah, I'd like to see that.

e1-0368: Think about the courage it takes to get on a leaky boat. Think about the desperation these people must be feeling. I'd like to know that new Australians are courageous, determined, very keen on living in a democracy. I think they make great new Aussies. I know what they do is illegal and it would be a nice thing if they could get in line with others but these are people in life threatening situations. (If they are not legitimate refugees the system will screen them out.) I'm keen on limited onshore detention then absorption into the community. The churches and welfare agencies do a lot and the Government should financially support community organisations to help get boat people started. The show is a great concept. Thanks SBS - you're the best.

e1-0369: Umm doesn't it state that a genuine refugee must seek asylum in the NEAREST NON-HOSTILE COUNTRY.... which is clearly not Australia.... it could be Jordan,

Saudi Arabia, Egypt... the list goes on... therefore these people are NOT GENUINE ASYLUM SEEKERS.... they are CHOOSING to come here for various reasons (family here etc) and we barely have the infrastructure and resources to maintain our own population... and YES that goes to people who come by PLANE too

e1-415: Racist this and racist that, why is it such an overused and now seemingly pointless word? Just a massive cop out and a way to try and make yourself feel better by calling people racists. If this is a such a known racist country and we are all such mean, heartless people, why live here? If I wanted to live in an asian country but knew they were racist towards white people, do you think I'd go live there? I won't bother watching this(which I was going to) because it won't change how I think.

e1-0438: Apart from the traditional owners all Australians are boat people in one form or another. Any argument against refugees and in particular genuine asylum seekers must boil down to racism and xenophobia. We are a fortunate country who can and should do more to help these people and more of these people. An asylum seekers status should be determined not by a flunky of the Australian legislative branch, answering to a politician, but by an Australian magistrate, who is fair minded and doesn't have a political agenda. This is what we demand of our government as we know it is fair, how can we allow Chris Bowen to be their arbitrator of justice.

e1-0594: Hi. I think it is important for everyone to remember here that 1) The family from Africa in this episode admitted that the refugee camp was terrible and they had no safety there 2) People often are facing death if they stay to find legitimate means to get to Australia and so flee. The other countries along the way, like the camp in Kenya are no better from where they fled. So should they stay to let their children and themselves die? That is their experience. So to say boat people are cue jumpers and taking places from others in camps like they are common criminals is unjust. First give people a safe means of waiting in another country and process people faster then they are now and maybe people will not risk their lives on the boats. Not everything is black and white.

e1-0614: I watched the 1st episode today and understood that this is just a pre-meditate story but couldn't stand the story that did not reflect 100% of the dangerous emotionally and physically of escaping on a tiny little boat on the way to freedom. As one of the many thousands of Vietnamese boat people, I had experienced the trauma, not just one journey but many many times travelling on a cramped like sardines tiny wooden boat starting when I was only 12. We all understood that the chance of dying on the sea is far greater than reaching our freedom but it's worth the risk. My parents understood that they might not never see their son again but we all hoped for the best although it's a very slim chance. I was even escaping to Cambodia then to Thailand not one but twice. Twice we're being pushed back out to the sea. However, that did not stop my determination of escaping the Communist to freedom. Nobody wanted to leave their own country or their loved ones. All we're looking for is freedom.

e1-0630: Wayy too many refugees here taking over.Where on earth are they all coming from?If I was in their country I would respect them and that its there home.That is why I am not racist.But when they come here taking over our home and our space well that's another story.Take them back before its too late.Go to your homes.This is our home.

e1-0650: I know this is a completely selfish way to think, but one of my main problems with asylum seekers is the fear that they will bring the problems of the country with them. Just like them, I dont want to live in a country that is filled with violence, war and poverty. How many of them can we take before the countries they are escaping from turn on us?

e1-0656: I felt manipulated by the show. I do not think that the asylum seekers/refugees picked for the show are representative of the ones that are causing concern in Australian society. How about showing the radical refugees/migrants that want to change

the face of Australia through introducing sharia law or those that simply don't want to integrate. Clearly the African family would be welcome by most Australians - they appreciate the country they have come to and do not want to destroy it or force their culture onto others. I just feel the program was too manipulative/sanitised. I find it striking that tomorrow night's episode will be visiting Malaysia (5 for 1 swap anyone??). The program is sponsored by the Australian and NSW Governments. And just for the record the young girl is entitled to her opinion/free speech - the very thing that most advocates of illegal immigrants hold dear for themselves, but only if you agree with them.

e1-0717: You work all your life, pay taxes, these refugees arrive, and get more from the government, than you do. Is that fair, Australia look after your own first, and send them to to the back of the queue, if they arrive, by boat.

e1-0766: This is such a biased show. And SBS has censored my comments because I criticized it for doing so. Wow... Isn't that what the regimes you criticize do? SBS... We believe in openness... As long as your views align with ours..SBS is an irresponsible organization with a political agenda that is made up off left wing Wankers! And this show just re-enforces that.

e1-0814: Well done SBS for showing a true picture of what it is to be an asylum seeker coming to Australia. Hoepfully, it will open the eyes of some Australians who probably have an unsympathetic view of asylum seekers. Again, the number of people coming to Australia pales into insignificance in comparison to other countries. I can't wait for tomorrow's episode now!!

e1-0829: Yeah all very nice to focus on some individual asylum seekers but it's the overall effect of mass immigration that is problematic. I'm English and I've seen what's happened there. Asylum seekers can get over \$50,000 a year in benefits for doing nothing. Halal meat is now sold everywhere, Muslims are attacking Jews, Hindus, Sikhs and Christians and Middle Eastern gangs are grooming young teenage girls into being sex slaves. What you have is just the beginning.

e1-0875: The story is interesting and I am keen to see where will this story go. I myself am from a country that produced asylum seekers in the past, although I have never been a refugee. I know everyone has their own story and I think the program is a propaganda as many boat people do have their mobile phones, money, possessions and documents up until time they arrive in Australia. They have family here who sent them money to come over. If anyone say they are running away from death and life situation, they should be prepared to wait for their processing to happen. What man in danger will leave their wife and children behind if it is really that dangerous! I guess none! I know my father would not leave me behind! You can see real refugees who spent many years in refugee camps. They are the ones Australia should look after. Boat people should be returned to the country they last came from - Indonesia! Thats what happens in any other country in the world! Do not jump the line!

e1-0879: Why don't they show some violent refugees/boat people.. How do you know 60 on the boat aren't fresh from Stoning a woman on the street? Woudn't want to get in an argument with them if they turned out to be my neighbour!.

e1-0941: I don't think they are the poorest people... 10K (what they paid to the smugglers) very good money even here. (at least for most of us) What gives the right to jump the legal refugee's cue? Just because they can afford it? And I don't question the people's hard life or story here... Just the method. Of course if we get close to anyone emotionally, hard to say no. But we have official authorities with set-up rules for decide who is eligible to come. Ps: the "documentarists" should make a part which made in the real refugee camps, who has no 10K dollar to pay the smugglers, lets see what we think about them...

- e1-1022: How is it that so many people think that asylum seekers come to Australia on a whim? Who would risk their lives and their families to come here? It's because they have been tortured, persecuted and their lives put at risk in their own countries. Australians like these ignorant people on the show need to think about what motivates people to do this! Hurrah for this programme!
- e1-1117: To me this is simple. If you are a legitimate refugee; and as long as you do not try to push to the front of the cue, you deserve to be considered. If you illegally arrive in Australia on a boat; you are not only forcing yourself on Australia, breaking our laws etc but you are also spitting in the face of the other refugees waiting in line to restart their life. Zero tolerance to Boat People. More tolerance to legitimate refugees!
- e1-1143: I believe there are genuine refugees who have fled their countries from fear of murder or persecution. I am sorry for them. They are to be found in camps just across the border in neighbouring countries. That is where Australia should be taking its refugee intake from. Illegal immigrants to Australia are people cherrypicking where they would like to live from the point of view of economic advantage. They should not gain priority by doing this, over people who wait patiently for resettlement.
- e2-0010: Thanks SBS another great Doco. I do feel for people all over the world who do not have the luxury of living free and easy as we do in Australia. But I do not agree with the people who come here illegally in boats that are cashed up, have credit cards, gold, etc. They have the money to start the journey, pay police and boarder guards bribes to go from one country to another, pay for accomodation, food and then pay heaps to a people smuggler to bring them here. With all that money, why just not go to the embassy and apply legitimately like everyone else and if you have nothing to hide and have good intensions then all should be ok. As I stated before, I feel for the real refugees stuck in those camps living in squalid humpies, and little food of good nutritional value, kids getting sick and endless crimes against the weak and vulnerable, a nightmare for the girls and women. I am happy for the government to help the real refugees, but not the free loaders.
- e2-0051: This show really is great and gives us a small viewing point to witness some of the hardships which asylum seekers and refugees endure. But the majority of the people watching this show aren't narrow minded and are open to the idea of the said 'boat people' creating new lives in Australia. Preaching to the converted. For the documentary to fulfill its ultimate purpose, it should be showed on a major network like 7, 9 or 10 or shown in schools. I really think it should be shown in high schools. A lot of young people form the views that their parents have, and if their views are that asylum seekers are 'criminals' and they they should stay in their own countries, then they really should be shown the reality. I simply can't comprehend people who have stagnant and uneducated ideas about issues such as this.
- e2-0069: You should really have stayed at school.....and now, you should really get a job...I hate the fact that I pay taxes for people like you to bludge. I would rather pay higher taxes to fund a greater intake of boat people/refugees.
- e2-0194: I thought that Gleny was the only one at the start of the experience with any empathy for asylum seekers and the only one with views on refugees similar to my own. She gives me hope for this country. It is nice though to see the rude awakening some of the others are getting, and amazing just how ignorant they were beforehand. But I cannot believe how self centred and judgemental Raquel is still behaving - other people's suffering seems to mean nothing to her, as though they somehow deserve it. And I am so sick of this attitude that an asylum seeker is "illegal" - they have not done anything illegal coming to Australia to seek asylum, whether it is on a plane or a boat!!!
- e2-265: Would someone please tell Raquel that people seeking asylum are not committing a crime? Article 31 of the Refugee Convention (to which Australia is a signatory) recognises that refugees have a lawful right to enter a country for the purposes of

seeking asylum, regardless of how they arrive or whether they hold valid travel or identity documents. It is also incorrect to refer to asylum seekers who arrive without authorisation as "illegal", as they in fact have a lawful right to do so if they are seeking asylum. A measure of a person's maturity is their capacity to empathise with another human being. Raquel has shown tiny moves in this direction but seems stuck in her inability to throw her deep prejudices or to question her hypocrisy.

e2-0300: Although this program shows true insights of refugees miserable life and conditions, it is being broadcasted to brainwash Australians with emotional incidents on this. So that , we dont oppose govt policy to shelter asylum seekers. Most of them are criminals and will do the same things here. Sydney's certain suburbs are the proof of their activity. If you allow 'some' religions here, they will destroy our culture, values and everything because they are rigid and cruel by heart. Ban them, otherwise you will see a '9/11' in Aus in near future...God bless us all ozzies.....

e2-0347: I think what the government fails to take into account is that refugees who are fortunate enough to be accepted by Australia, despite being perceived as a burden on the economy and our resources, will ultimately work hard to support the future of their children and future generations. When you've done through what you have to get there, there's no way you're going to throw it away. In many ways, people and children who come from these backgrounds are exponentially more hard working and conscientious than the white kids back home who have grown up with shelter, food and education as rights and not privileges. These asylum seekers will ultimately work the jobs the Australians think they're too good for, and their children will, if they've learn enough from the experience, work hard at securing their own future because it is one that doesn't come easily. If you have the humanity to help those in need, there will be future fruits of labour, even if it's not yet quantifiable.

e2-0407: I would rather have any refugee, boat person, anybody that is willing to work for a living in this country. This young girl in this show that doesn't work, she is on the dole, and I am paying for her! I am paying for this young ignorant bludger! I find her more offensive than any boat person or refugee.

e2-0408: Do the majority of Australians actually understand WHY it is essential to detain ALL unlawful arrivals into Australia, whether it be by boat or plane? I suspect they don't quite understand the reasons for doing so. Sadly, amongst the GENUINE REFUGEES, there are those that hide amongst them and PRETEND to be refugees. It is the fundamental priority of ALL governments to protect its citizens and that includes ENSURING THOSE THAT DO GET ACCEPTED into our great country are the ones truly deserving, and in need. NOT THOSE THAT WILL POSE A FURTHER SECURITY RISK to our way of living. This is WHY ALL MUST BE DETAINED. IF THEY BRING their identification with them then they would spend less time in processing.

e2-0498: Most genuine refugees have grown up in, and luckily survived through very difficult times. Anything they might meet in their "escape" is not necessarily a trauma to them, compared to what they (supposedly) left. However, for people brought up in relative safety and comfort in Australia, it is ONLY NATURAL that every "different" and "difficult" situation has a much more traumatic effect. And THAT, as intended by SBS and maybe others, extracts additional sympathy for ALL refugees, legal AND illegal, from the participants and the viewers!

e2-0563: I think the producers need to not confuse their audience. The police raid in Malaysia managed to get more illegal immigrants than the "Chins". I migrated to Australia 8 years ago from Malaysia and I saw the people getting picked up from the police raid have green Indonesian passports in their possession. I feel sorry for the genuine asylum seekers but not for illegal immigrants who did not come from war torn countries. Please producers, if you want to sell your story and portray the real difference between asylum seekers and illegal immigrants, then I will support you. By the way, I also work for the immigration detention centres in Perth so I know the difference!

- e2-0589: SBS ... you have done it again ...tonight's program was one of the best I have ever seen in dealing with the issue of refugees and asylum seekers. To understand the reasons behind the asylum seekers phenomena, we need to look into the root causes of the issue and try to understand what makes a person take so much risk!!!! That's exactly what this program is successfully doing. SBS you got us talking and really communicating with open minds ... CONGRATULATIONS!
- e2-0761: Nice to see that so many ppl are watching and enjoying the program, well done SBS on producing a show that informs and makes people take notice of this prominent issue. I am so sorry for all those who love to pay out Raquel so hard, yes she is heartless (to those she hasn't met) and a princess when it comes to the facilities and food provided, but really, can anyone say that when they were 21 that they didn't have strong opinions on things that they really had no idea, or understood in depth? unfortunately, everyone seems to think that all ppl who arrive in Oz on a boat are "genuine" refugees. since when? those who come on boats, pay money to smugglers, throw away there documentation so that they cannot be identified as whatever they were at home, and then expect to be granted 'refugee' status and re-settled, I don't think so! if we accept the 'genuine' refugees and not the 2% who are queue jumpers, then the country would be a much better place
- e3-0032: I can tell you all this is the sort of stuff Australia and other countries who have issues with asylum seekers or refugees to look in to, some times you got to view the book before you judge it by what you see on the cover, i know many people are lazy and some are eager to find out answers, how did this people really came in to this position? why are they here? what drove them here?? what is the story behind their lives??? well really i have thank my teacher for showing me this video i think its educating.
- e3-0044: I feel that their "experience" was not deep enough. Having worked with refugees and asylum seekers in Europe as well as in a camp in Africa, I know that what these people experienced in nowhere close to what refugees go through. They are shocked by the experience, and it has just been a toned down soft version of what refugees go though, of what camp life is like, of what fearing for one's life is like. I wish the experiment had been pushed further.
- e3-0109: Whilst I applaud SBS for tackling this complex, fraught and often misunderstood subject!! I congratulate the participants and the producers of the documentary. However, I couldn't help but wonder about the contrived nature of all the 'experiences' these participants were engaged in. Also, I felt a little uncomfortable about watching human beings suffering in the way that was revealed. Seeing people at their most vulnerable, terrified and at the mercy of the authorities was far too much for me, because we couldn't really do anything about it; despite the fact that we know the conditions that asylum seekers have to endure. On the positive, it was absolutely refreshing to see Raquel have a change of heart, as she unfortunately represents a particular 'type' of character, therefore way of thinking, she did speak for many ignorant and misinformed people with similar attitudes in Australia.
- e3-0181: Do the producers of this series realise what a powerful tool they have? I have now totally changed my view of boat people, refugees, whatever you like to call them. Every politician, student and citizen of Australia should be made to view this series. I am ashamed of our country. We have a lot of space. Let them in. Let them do the jobs that we as Australians think we are too good to do such as cleaning toilets.
- e3-0250: Fellow Australians, listen closely – NEVER FORGET we are ALL 'boat people' in this land (with the exception of full-blood Aborigines, and no-one is sure if they didn't paddle across from somewhere...) — whether we were shipped here in 1788, fled war, famine or poverty in 19th or 20th centuries, or a month back. For those of us born here, it is just sheer DUMB LUCK – it was not anything good we did to 'deserve' it, just as people living in war zones, or under corrupt and tyrannical regimes did not commit any sin or crime to deserve that either.

- e3-0335: Hey guys, i was a refugee, who now lives in Australia. I moved here in 1994 after staying at an Indonesian refugee camp for 5 years. My family, minus my father (ie. my mother and 4 young children, i was 8months), initially came to Malaysia, we stayed there for 10 days before we got deported like those people who were caught in the program (ie. put on a rickety boat and told to go that way to Indonesia). It took over 2 months of "travel" from Vietnam to Indonesia. And many many boats sank, luckily ours did not. My mother has told me some horrific stories of what she has been through, it wasn't easy. But still, let me tell you guys, when you're fighting for your life, there is no queue. My family had to wait for 5 years, but even then, i completely understand why people would go on a boat. Just like "boat people" and "people smuggler", the term "queue jumping is stupid. There are humans involved, always remember. HUMANS, not boat people.
- e3-0795: I have always admired Malcolm Frazer for speaking out against governing politicians policies regarding the plight of asylum seekers and refugees. I never once for a minute believed the " Children Overboard" propagander spun by the former Howard government to win the federal election of that year and I blame that event for the populace negative attitudes surrounding the plight of refugees in this country. It has long been my opinion that boat people should be viewed as being brave and courageous individuals displaying persistent and resilient personal attributes, that in society could only make Australia better. I would much prefer to see my tax dollars going towards programs to support such people then welfare cheats and dole bludgers. Congratulations to SBS for their insightful presentation on this issue. Hopefully this will help undo Howards psychological poisoning of our collective Aussie psyche.
- e3-0442: epic! i can't find another word. as one of the australians said, the issue is too complex to divide in black and white, right and wrong. i'm from germany and we have the same problem with thousands of african refugees arriving on the islands of lampedusa or malta. i agree with everybody who says that we can't take them all but it is our responsibility to take care of the people and their countries. who profits of the cheap workers in these countries? we do! who profits of the unclear political situation which makes it much more easier for us and our companies to get the licenses to exploit the resources? we do! i know this a dream, i know this is politics. thanks sbs for this show
- e3-0824: People like Brad (22:49) is what is wrong with our country- his comment has shown the obsession far too many Australians have with only trying to protect what we have instead of doing the humanitarian thing and reaching out to help fellow human beings that need our help. There sadly is far too many an Australian that would welcome a return to the bad old days of the White Australian policy. Most Australians have fantastic hearts, and I hope this show has opened their eyes to see just a tiny piece of what pain and suffering there is on our world. We live in a wonderful democratic society and in peace and if we can help others escape the terrible situations they find themselves in, we should. That is not to say that we should throw open the doors and let everyone and anyone in- but as a very lucky country there is far more that we can and should be doing. Fantastic work SBS - it is good to see some parts of the media presenting the other side of the asylum seeker/boat people story.
- e3-1088: I have just come back to Australia from a two month holiday in Africa, Kenya. I am a Mzungu (white man) married to an African lady. My tears flowed from my eyes watching this program. I just hope all those people out there that see boat people and refugees as lesser people, watch this program and I hope you will be enlightened not to think this way again. How do we move forward? How do we fix this problem? Let's make a movement, let's show to our useless politicians, that we do care and open our borders, to our immediate family. If it's an issue of money, don't pay them Centrelink. Make it a obligation and a responsibility of the family already in Australia to look after them, and if they can't do that, without benefits, then they are returned. Now this

brings up issues of cause. But what I have seen living in Africa for two months, people that don't get benefits from the government, make it work, and becomes creative. Our government just has to be a little flexible.

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