

## Communication: Information Description

The term ‘Communication: Information’ refers to those constructions that construe an act of communication in which information is exchanged. There are 82 constructions belonging to this semantic field, drawing on 26 verb complementation patterns.

**The Systemic Network.** The Systemic Network shows independent choices in relation to the participants, content, and circumstances expressed by the constructions.

There are independent choices in relation to these **participants**:

- The **communicator** may be specified by type, number, and role. In most cases, the type is an animate Sayer, but in some cases it is an inanimate Source. This distinguishes between ‘Tim suggested it was a dinosaur’ and ‘The findings suggested it was a dinosaur’. The number is in most cases unspecified, but some constructions are contrasted by relating to individual or collaborative communicative acts. This distinguishes between ‘Tim agreed that they should share the bill’ and ‘They all agreed on the process for sharing the bill’. Finally, the functional role of the communicator is usually the Subject, as in ‘Tim spoke to Amy’, but it may be the Object, as in ‘Amy listened to Tim’.
- The **recipient** may be indicated in the construction or not, that is, the construction may be with or without a Hearer. This distinguishes between ‘Amy told Tim a story’ and ‘Amy told a story’. The Hearer is usually the Object, as in ‘Tim spoke to Amy’, but it may be the Subject, as in ‘Amy listened to Tim’.
- The act of communication may indicate a **target**, or not. This distinguishes between ‘The teacher shouted orders’ and ‘The teacher shouted at the children’.

In terms of **content**, there is a choice between expressing or not expressing the content of the communication. Most constructions indicate specific content as an independent element, but a few do not, as in ‘Amy thanked Tim’, where the content is indicated by the verb alone. If content is indicated as an element of the construction, it may be a message, a topic, or metalanguage. Examples are: ‘Tim said that he was leaving at six’; ‘Tim talked about his departure’; ‘Tim made a prediction’.

In most cases, constructions are not distinguished by aspects of **circumstance**. In some cases, however, constructions are distinguished by Affect (e.g. ‘Amy criticised Tim’), Medium (e.g. ‘Tim wrote a speech’), or the position of the utterance in relation to others (e.g. ‘Amy added a few comments’).

The full Systemic network can be seen in the document ‘Communication: Information Systemic Network’.

**The Meaning Network.** The Meaning Network combines several aspects of the Systemic Network, specifying distinctions where these are relevant in context. The main distinctions are shown below, with examples.

- Information is elicited.
  - The construction specifies a Hearer.
    - The construction also specifies a message.
      - V n wh. Cx1 e.g. ‘Cindy asked Jake what he wanted to eat.’
      - V n n. Cx2 e.g. ‘Cindy asked Jake his name.’
      - V n from n. Cx3 e.g. ‘Cindy demanded information from Jake.’ and Cx4 e.g. ‘Cindy coaxed information from Jake.’
    - The construction also specifies a topic.
      - V n about n. Cx2 e.g. ‘Cindy questioned Jake about his preferences.’
    - The construction does not specify any other element.
      - V with n. Cx13 e.g. ‘Cindy checked with Jake.’

- The construction does not specify a Hearer.
  - The construction specifies a message.
    - V wh. Cx2 e.g. ‘Cindy inquired what Jake wanted to eat.’
  - The construction specifies a topic.
    - V about n. Cx5 e.g. ‘Cindy called about their dinner plans.’ and Cx6 e.g. ‘Cindy asked about their dinner plans.’
- Information is given
  - The construction specifies a message.
    - The construction indicates the hearer.
      - V n that
        - The communicator is a Sayer.
          - Cx1 e.g. ‘Selma informed Dilip that she wanted chips.’
          - Cx2 e.g. ‘Dilip reassured Selma that chips were available.’
          - Cx3 e.g. ‘Selma warned Dilip that the food was hot.’
          - Cx4 e.g. ‘Dilip persuaded Selma that salad was a better option.’
        - The communicator is a Source.
          - Cx6 e.g. ‘The tests showed Dilip that he should eat less salt.’
      - V n wh
        - The communicator is a Sayer.
          - Cx2 e.g. ‘Selma told Dilip what he should eat.’
        - The communicator is a Source.
          - Cx3 e.g. ‘The tests reminded Dilip what he should eat.’
            - V n n. Cx1 e.g. ‘Dilip told Selma the outcome of the experiment.’
            - V n of n. Cx3 e.g. ‘Dilip notified Selma of the results.’ and Cx4 e.g. ‘Dilip persuaded Selma of the need to exercise more.’
      - The construction does not indicate the hearer.
        - The construction indicates a target.
          - V n to-inf. Cx6 e.g. ‘Phil alleged the dog to be the source of the outbreak.’
          - V n n/adj. Cx12 e.g. ‘Phil called his friend an idiot.’
          - V n as n/adj.
            - Cx4 e.g. ‘Phil described his friend as an idiot.’
            - Cx5 e.g. ‘Phil condemned his friend as an idiot.’
            - Cx6 e.g. ‘Phil misrepresented his friend as an idiot.’
          - V n for n
            - Cx2 e.g. ‘Amy praised the driver for her courage.’
            - Cx3 e.g. ‘Amy forgave the driver for her mistake.’
            - Cx4 e.g. ‘Amy criticised the driver for her mistake.’
          - V n of n. Cx5 e.g. ‘Phil accused his friend of stupidity.’
        - The construction does not indicate a target.
          - V that
            - The communicator is a Sayer.
              - The level of directness is specified. Cx1 e.g. ‘Amy said that the driver was brave.’ and Cx2 e.g. ‘Amy hinted that the driver caused the accident.’
              - The type of affect is specified.
                - Cx3 e.g. ‘Amy concurred that she was to blame.’
                - Cx4 e.g. ‘Amy predicted that the cost would be high.’
                - Cx5 e.g. ‘Amy grumbled that the cost would be high.’
              - The medium is specified. Cx6 e.g. ‘Phil shouted that the cost was too high.’ and Cx7 e.g. ‘Phil wrote that the cost was too high.’

- The position of the utterance is specified. Cx8 e.g. ‘Amy added that the cost was too high.’
  - The communicator is a Source. Cx9 e.g. ‘The findings indicated that it had been an accident.’
    - V wh
      - Cx1 e.g. ‘Sara explained what they should do.’
      - Cx4 e.g. ‘They all agreed what they should do.’
      - Cx3 e.g. ‘They debated what they should do.’
    - V -ing. Cx13 e.g. ‘Sara described seeing the accident.’
    - V n -ing. Cx5 e.g. ‘Sara described the car disappearing.’
    - V to n. Cx21 e.g. ‘Phil admitted to the crime.’ and Cx23 e.g. ‘Phil agreed to a fine.’
- The construction specifies a topic.
  - The construction also indicates the hearer.
    - Hearer focus: the noun following the verb indicates the hearer.
      - V n about n
        - Affect is not specified. Cx1 e.g. ‘Sara notified Phil about the fine.’
        - Affect is specified. Cx3 e.g. ‘Sara teased Phil about the fine.’ and Cx4 e.g. ‘Sara challenged Phil about the fine.’
      - Topic focus: the noun following the verb indicates the topic.
        - V n at n. Cx2 e.g. ‘Jake levelled criticism at Mo.’ and Cx3 e.g. ‘Jake shouted insults at Mo.’
        - V n to n
          - Affect is not specified.
            - Cx20 e.g. ‘Mo broke the news to Jake.’
            - Cx21 e.g. ‘Mo announced his promotion to the group.’
            - Cx24 e.g. ‘Mo demonstrated his commitment to his employers.’
          - Affect is specified. Cx22 e.g. ‘Mo commended Jake to his employers.’ and Cx23 e.g. ‘Mo denounced Jake to his employers.’
        - V n with n. Cx10 e.g. ‘Mo forged an agreement with Jake.’
  - The construction does not indicate the hearer.
    - The construction indicates a target.
      - V about n.
        - Individual communication
          - Cx7 e.g. ‘Jake talked about his enemies.’
          - Cx1 e.g. ‘Jake enthused about his new job.’
          - Cx2 e.g. ‘Jake complained about his new job.’
          - Cx3 e.g. ‘Jake babbled about his enemies.’
          - Cx4 e.g. ‘Jake boasted about his new job.’
        - Collaborative communication. Cx8 e.g. ‘They argued about the accident.’
          - V against n. Cx10 e.g. ‘Jake raged against his enemies.’
          - V at n. Cx13 e.g. ‘Jake grumbled at his duties.’
          - V of n. Cx1 e.g. ‘Jake complained of his duties.’
          - V over n.
            - Individual communication. Cx2 e.g. ‘Jake enthused over his new job.’
            - Collaborative communication. Cx1 e.g. ‘Jake and Mo fought over the cause of the accident.’
    - The construction does not indicate a target.
      - V n (Communication)
        - Cx4 e.g. ‘Mo described the picture.’

- Cx5 e.g. ‘Mo confirmed the decision.’
    - Cx7 e.g. ‘Mo published a book of poetry.’
  - V on n. Cx1 e.g. ‘Sara talked on a new topic.’ and Cx2 e.g. ‘Sara and Jake agreed on the best way forward.’
  - V to n. Cx22 e.g. ‘Sara referred to Mo’s book.’ and Cx24 e.g. ‘Sara swore to the truth of her statement.’
- The construction specifies metalanguage.
  - V n (Communication). Cx7 e.g. ‘Mo created a poem.’
  - V n with n. Cx9 e.g. ‘Mo bandied words with Jake.’
- The construction does not specify content.
  - The construction indicates the hearer.
    - V n (Communication)
      - Cx1 e.g. ‘Sara answered Dilip.’
      - Cx2 e.g. ‘Sara thanked Dilip.’
      - Cx3 e.g. ‘Sara encouraged Dilip.’
    - V to n
      - The Sayer is the Subject. Cx11 e.g. ‘Dilip talked to Sara.’
      - The Hearer is the Subject. Cx13 e.g. ‘Sara listened to Dilip.’
    - V with n. Cx11 e.g. ‘Dilip agreed with Sara.’
  - The construction indicates a target.
    - V pron-refl. Cx19 e.g. ‘Jake explained himself.’