Review of English Resultative: A Force-Recipient Account

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Abstract

Whether generative approaches(such as a small clause analysis or lexical rule analysis), or constructional approaches(such as Goldbergs' constructional analysis and boas' frame semantic analysis) didn't give a persuasive account to the heatedly-discussed English resultatives. Iwata gives it a force-recipient account, which explains not only: Why can non-subcategorized objects appear in resultatives? Which resultatives are possible and which are not?. The defining characteristic of the English resultatives is that basically, as a result of the force being exerted onto the post-verbal NP entity (or the subject entity), a change of state or a change of location ensues (Iwata,2020, p.513). Besides, Iwata also clarifies what resultatives are based on the force-transmission resultatives, and what are based on motion, and what are not resultatives contrary to traditional belief. Finally, Iwata makes a distinction between AP and PP result phrase in resultatives, and negates such restrictions as maximal endpoint constraints, end-of-scale constraint, affectedness constraint, aspectual constraint, unique path constraint.

Keywords

Lexical-constructional approach; English resultatives; A force-recipient account.

1. Introduction

Seizi Iwata's recent book proposes a force-recipient account on English resultatives. It, by drawing on causal-chain force analysis and frame semantics analysis, successfully answers two fundamental questions of English Resultatives both scholars and laypeople show interest in: Why can non-subcategorized objects appear in resultatives? Which resultatives are possible and which are not (Iwata,2020, p.14)? Either a small clause analysis or lexical rule analysis in generative grammar just attempts to answer the first question. A constructional approach By Goldberg recourses to semantic coherence principle by fusing argument roles and participant roles to answer the first question, but fails to answer the second questions. A big improvement has been made by Boas who strives to account for resultatives with rich frame semantic meanings of verbs. However, He ascribes to conventionalization or non-conventionalization subtle differences in some acceptable resultatives and unacceptable ones. It is tantamount to saying nothing by resorting to whether an expression is conventionalized. A more preferred way is to reveal why one of the two expressions is well-formed and gain currency among people and finally become conventionalized, and others are somehow ill-formed (Iwata,2020, p.15). In view of this, Seizi Iwata's force-recipient account finds its way to both the first and the second question. Contrary to Goldberg's argument construction approach that holds constructions superimpose verbs, Seizi Iwata adopts a Lexical-constructional approach which emphasizes the interplay between verbs and constructions, and between verbs and result phrase.

The book consists of 9 parts. Part 1-3 lays a basic foundation for the force-recipient account.

Parts 1 gives a general account to English Resultatives. For example, 'He wiped the crumbs off the table', mean he exerts a wipe-as-push force on the crumbs, as a result it moves off the table. The crumbs was chosen is a matter of profile shift in conceptual scene. The crumbs normally don't occur as the subcategorized object of wipe. Additionally, only the off-stage information

that directly follows from the lexically encoded verb meaning is available to be overly expressed as a force recipient. For instance, 'They tramped the field flat' is acceptable while 'they crossed the field flat' is not, because tramp lexically encodes a force acted upon the direct object entity, it is not true of cross. What's more, the post-verbal NP must be the direct force-recipient of the verb. This explain why 'Brigid loaded the table's legs bent' is unacceptable. Secondly, The relationship between the verb and the result component is also of great importance to truly understand which resultative is possible and which is not. A good instance in point is that 'touch me awake'. It is still appropriate though the force touch is small in size. And 'touch him unconscious' is not acceptable, because force of touch is too weak to cause him unconscious. Instead, 'knock/beat/batter him unconscious' is plausible. Finally Force-recipient account also applies to the intransitive resultatives: RESULTANT component missing and ACT ON component retained. A case in point is that 'the kettle boiled dry', which means somebody boiled the kettle dry.

Part 2 Idiomatic expression also conforms to the force-recipient account. Idioms such as he 'laughed his head off' follows the law of force-dynamics, but it is a hyperbolically-used expression. He did a "laugh-as-vigorous-head-moving" action on his head, as a result his head almost moved off. This hyperbolic expression constitutes the prototypical type, with many extensions from it with an intensified meaning. 'He wonders his head off' is an extension in point, meaning he uses his brain intensely and does not need to strictly follow the law of force dynamics. V one's head off form a polysemous structure. The same holds of "V one's {/butt/socks} off" and 'V one's {heart/lungs/guts} out'. Furthermore, another type of English resultative 'V the shit out of /v the hell out of / v the daylights out of' is also motivated force dynamically with "v the content coming out of a container" schema, as if the post-verbal NP is metaphorically coming out of an entity that has been strongly beaten. These hyperbolically-used expressions with an intensifier meaning constitutes a polysemous network structure. But for 'V the life out of', if the literal meaning of 'v the life out of 'is realized (e.g., the policeman knocked him to the ground and kicked the life out of him), it is impossible to form a polysemous structure. If its literal meaning is not realized (e.g., he'd have hugged the life out of her), It forms a polysemous network structure.

Part 3 introduces resultative and domains. It is enchanting and plausible to account for resultatives with rich frame semantics of verbs. Many highly-disputed and puzzling expressions has been incorporated into the force-recipient account. For example, 'Jack ate himself full' can be paraphrased as "Jack did an 'EAT-AS-PUT+PROCSS+INGEST' action upon himself, and as a result he became full" if we see the verb from the perspective of physical domain; 'He drinks himself into steadiness' is against the physiological domain, or, to be specific, healthy drinking domain, in that he does a DRINK-AS-BENEFIT HIS HEALTH action upon himself, as a result he becomes steady; 'Drink…under the table' can be explained against social activity domain, for in the spontaneous pseudo-drinking competition, one drinker forces the other one to drink the same amount of alcohol as him repeatedly, the other one fails and finally falls under the table. One issue worth noting here is that sometimes not only the domain but also the phrase of the domain should be compatible with the result component. 'Stefan chewed his plate clean' seems awkward just because chewing indicates just one phase of eating and provides no possibility to clean his plate. It also comes as natural that certain patterns may form a polysemous network structure with the prototype as its center and extensions departing from it. 'V…under the table', 'v…out of house and home',' v…oneself silly' are also such cases and can be understood in certain domains.

Part 4 places emphasis on the resultatives with change verbs. Unlike ordinary resultatives, the result component is not predicted of the post-verbal entity but the entity after being acted upon with a different name. For example, thin in 'cut the meat thin', is predicted of the slices of the meat rather than the meat. So, all the English resultatives including change verbs can be

paraphrased with a little modification as "X acts on Y, and as a result Yα is/moves Z", herein Yα is the entity after being acted upon. For example, 'cut the meat thin' will be paraphrased as "He cut the meat, as a result, the meat being acted upon was thin". Resultatives with open/shut result phrase (e.g., He swung the door open, He broke the egg open) seems like change verb resultatives, for the internalized translational motion expressed by the verb and open as the result component are just two facets of one and the same event. Two ways are available to the English resultative syntax. The argument construction analysis here proposed by Goldberg deal with cases like 'he laugh himself silly', and the result-phrase additional analysis can't be avoided to give further details of the frame semantics of the verbs. For instance, 'He wiped the blade clean on his coat' is syntactically understood as [he wiped the blade in his coat] +[free]. Only in this way can we give a detailed information of frame semantics of the verb. And both analyses are available to some sentences such as 'he hammered the metal flat'.

Part 5 attaches importance to result component. Force-recipient account reveals that adjectival result phrases are chosen when a new state results immediately after the verbal force takes effect, but prepositional result phrases are chosen when a process leading up to a new state starts when the verbal force takes effect (Iwata ,2020, P307). The choice is motivated by their notional difference, with the adjective denoting states and prepositions process. The conflicting observations result from the fact that different scholars (Goldberg and Rappaport Hovav & Levin) have been approaching on different result components, hence different conclusions. The consequence of this distinction benefits to make clear why views of Goldberg and Rappaport Hovav & Levin each seems plausible, but contradicts each other. It is just because they have focused on different result phrases Goldberg focused on resultatives with AP result phrase, while Rapport Hovov &Levin on resultatives with PP result phrases. The basic characterization of English resultatives has been clarified based on the AP/PP distinction. With regard to such resultative as 'cry oneself to slee'p, PP result phrase can't be replaced by AP result phrase for there is a process leading up to a new state. In addition to this, there's no direct force causing sb to eventually fall asleep, i.e., the crying process counts as a release of restraint removing the worry or sadness, which makes it possible for one to eventually fall asleep instead of directly causing somebody to go to sleep. This type of force is construed as enabling causation. Iwata also introduces one of the intriguing discussion of differences between to result phrase and into result phrase. Lexical meaning of to or into determines that to result phrase is schematized as reaching a point on a scale or path, while into result phrase metaphorically construed as into a container. Another thing worth noting here is that when a prepositional phrase used as a path phrase does not necessarily indicate a process, because in resultative caused-motion(e.g., coast guard tugged the raft back to the shore), the verb tug involves continuous causation, but for the other type of resultative caused-motion sentences involving onset causation such as 'He hit the ball into center field', there is a temporal gap between the verbal event hit and the prepositional phrase event.

Part 6 makes a further study of selectional restriction of the adjectival result phrases, attesting the defectiveness of the weshsler's maximal end-point scale constraint and Goldberg's end-of-scale restraint with many counter examples, for instance, 'He pushed the door open/ajar' , and 'they drank themselves tipsy'. The adjectival phrases prove to just indicate a state, not the endpoint of a path. They are employed to refer to a new state which immediately results when the verbal force takes effect. The bare XP pattern and reflexive pattern are claimed to reflect the temporal dependence and temporal independence by Rappaport Hovav & Levin and Croft, but things prove to be more complex. Intransitive resultatives may encode the temporal independence (e.g. the coat steamed dry.) as well as temporal dependence of the verbal event and the result phrase(e.g. the ice froze solid.). Similarly, Transitive resultatives, contrary to people's usual beliefs, also shows co-extensiveness of the subevents(e.g. He broke the egg open). Lexical meaning of open in itself requires the co-extensiveness of the internalized translational

motion verbal event and the change of state). So some result phrases should also be taken into consideration when discussing the dependence and or independence of the event structure. What's more, Croft integrates the force-dynamic and aspect of the event structure, which shows inefficiency and inability to represent atelic events. And it necessitates no aspectual structure in many researches.

Part 7 and part 8 combine to constitute a complementary elucidation about English resultatives not applied to force-recipient account.

Part 7 sheds lights on some resultatives which are not based on force-transmission but motion. The motion-based resultatives feature ending with 'to victory, to success, to fame, to exhaustion, to safety, to freedom, out of sight, into view. Their result phrases violate the direct object restriction, for they are predicted of the subjects. Sentences in case are 'He walked to freedom, he passed from sight, and He ran to safety'. Another type of resultatives with free as the result phrase is not based on force-transmission, but self-initiated force, such as, 'wriggle/squrm/prie free'. However if "free" follows a postverbal-NP(e.g he Sam cut Mary fee. Here cut is construed as its separation meaning), the resultatives involved are based on force-transmission.

Part 8 concentrates on putative resultatives with change of location-entailing verbs, because PP just specifies the path. There is no causal relationship between the verbal event and the prepositional phrase(e.g. The wise men followed the star out of Bethlehem. And Bill disappeared down the road). Sound of motion verbs consist of motion-describing type (e.g. The trolley rumbled through the tunnel) and motion-induced type (e.g. The plane thudded into the earth.). Motion-describing type behaviors similarly with manner of motion types, because the sounds only exist in the course of the motion, just like the manner appearing simultaneously with the motion. Motion-induced type acts the same way as path-incorporating verbs (e.g. Bill entered through the bathroom window), for the prepositional phrases just further specify the path. The PP phrases bear no result relationship with the verbal event. Putative resultatives are by no means the resultatives, but sound of motion verbs when followed by open/shut result phrase such as 'The door creaked open ' is force-transmission-based resultatives, because the sound creak indicates the internalized translation motion of the door, consequently, it became open. This sentence is completely parallel to 'the door swung open'.

Part 9 reconsiders the unique path constraint and have a summary of the whole book. After the distinction between the adjectival result phrase and prepositional result phrase have been identified and the motion sentences have been discussed, the unique path constraint proposed by Goldberg seems applies to within a certain range, partly because the adjectival result phrases just denoting states cannot be considered as paths, partly because resultatives with adjectival result phrase and prepositional phrase is implausibly linked. But the combinations of them find their ways in such expressions as 'John knocked him unconscious to the ground'. Unconscious acts as the result of the knocking event and at the same time describe the subsequent falling event. The two result phrases combine in a natural way. Additionally, the fact that change of location verbs is prohibited to be followed by a result phrase. (e.g. a.* I sent John the vase broken.), is because no verbal force involved is responsible for bringing about the result. Probably, some force happens to take effect during the course of sending. Lastly, to death turns out not to be a result phrase, but metaphorically refer to the time, or place, or even the manner of the death.

Part 10 gives the summary and conclusion of the entire book. The defining characteristic of the English resultatives is that basically, as a result of the force being exerted onto the post-verbal NP entity (or the subject entity), a change of state or a change of location ensues (Iwata,2020, p.513). Both ordinary and change-of-state of verb resultatives conform to this force-recipient account. The non-categorization objects appear in resultatives is because of a profile shift in a conceptual scene or the verb frame semantics taken into consideration. That's why non-subcategorized post-verbal NP can appear in English resultatives. There are some idiomatic

resultatives (used hyperbolically or schematically, but following the pattern of force dynamics) with the prototype and their extensions always with intensifier meaning, to form a polysemous network structure. The force-recipient account complies with the usage-based model that newly encountered expressions fall with a certain linguistic structure, either by being attested as one of the instance, or being assimilated to the structure by similarity.

Some points throughout the book are summarized in this part to which resultatives are possible, and which are not: 1, post-verbal NP must be the force recipient (e.g. a. Jack ate his plate clean. *Brigid loaded the table's legs bent.). 2. The force must be appropriate for the result to ensue (e.g. The audience {laughed/?giggled/*pouted} the poor guy off the stage.)3. The verb must be compatible with the resultative as to the domain and the phrase in which the resultative is defined.(e.g. a. Stefan ate his plate clean, b. a. *Stefan chewed his plate clean.) 4. The result state must be compatible with the distinction between the AP and PP (e.g. a. He wiped his plate {clean/*to cleanliness}. b. He sang the baby {*asleep/to sleep}. c. Bob shot him {dead/to death}). 5. The adjectival result phrase must be the direct result of the verbal force (e.g.a. He hammered it {flat/smooth/shiny}，b. *He hammered it {beautiful/safe/tubular}).

Iwata is believed to furthers the previous study about English resultatives by using causal-chain analysis and frame semantics studies, thus make complete the force-recipient account. It not only has a detailed and complete study of resultatives based on force transmission, but also clarifies what are resultatives based on motion, even some special resultatives ending with free involving self-initiated force, with open/shut involving internalized motion, and putative resultatives involving no causal relationship between and the verbal event and the prepositional phrase.

The force-recipient account clarifies some puzzles. Previous studies hold adjectival phrase is the endpoint of a path, and subjected to such restrictions as maximal endpoint constraints, end-of-scale constraint, affectedness constraint, aspectual constraint, unique path constraint, but the present study uncovers the defects of these mistaken views, and believes adjectival result phrases denote state, and prepositional phrase denote process. Both Transitive resultatives and Intransitive resultatives involve the temporal dependence and temporal independence of the verbal event and the result event.

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