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Metonymical Expansion of Affected NPs in Resultative Constructions

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1. Introduction

English resultative constructions represent some state coming about for the referent of a certain noun phrase (NP) as a result of the action denoted by the verb. For example, the sentence in (1a) means that he wiped the table and it became clean consequently, while the sentence in (1b) means that the pub underwent some change as a result of their drinking. Similarly, the sentence in (1c) implies that the meat underwent a change of state from not thin to thin as a result of the action of his cutting it. These examples are what we call weak, strong, and spurious resultatives (in Washio's (1997) terminology¹), and resultative predicates such as *clean*, *dry*, and *thin* function as indicating the result states of the NPs in object positions. That is, resultative predicates (result XPs) are predicated of affected NPs in the resultative construction.

- (1) a. He wiped the table clean. (weak resultative)
- b. They drank the pub dry. (strong resultative)
- c. He cut the meat thin. (spurious resultative)

However, the affected entity occurring in the syntactic structure is not always identical to the one described in a result subevent. In (1a), intuitively, “the surface” of the table changes into a state of “clean.” In (1b), since the pub is not a container but a location, it is impossible for the pub to become dry. Furthermore, the sentence in (1c) does not mean that the meat itself becomes thin in the result state. When the meat receives the action of cutting, “a slice of meat” is created and its

property is described by *thin*. How do we interpret implicit entities in resultative constructions?

In this paper, I examine the metonymical expansion of affected NPs in resultative constructions in order to confirm whether adjectives occurring as result XPs (i.e., result APs) are predicated of other NPs, which are evoked by the object NPs. This paper is organized as follows. Section 2 presents the outline of Broccias' (2003) study and some problems with it. In sections 3 and 4, I introduce the cognitive notions developed by Langacker (1993, 1999) and Taniguchi (2003), and analyze the discrepancy between the affected NP and the actual referent in terms of metonymy and reference-point constructions. I look into the possibility that some result APs refer to the property of the "whole" entity, and propose a new account for temporal dependence in resultatives in section 5, presenting the conclusion in section 6.

2. A Previous Study

2.1. Broccias (2003)

Broccias (2003) deals mainly with two types of constructions, resultative constructions (e.g., *John hammered the metal flat*) and *at*-constructions (e.g., *John kicked at the wall*). Broccias analyzes these two constructions based on Langacker's framework of Cognitive Grammar, while he explains the selectional restrictions on result APs in resultative constructions and proposes the following generalization.

(2) The part-whole affectedness generalization

If a resultative adjective refers to a property P of an affected object Y, then P describes any part of Y (if possible).

(Broccias 2003: 157)

According to Broccias, this generalization captures the impossibility of the examples in (3b) and (4). The sentences in (3) and (4) are the data from Wechsler (2001), cited by Broccias.

- (3) a. He hammered the metal {flat/smooth}.
 b. *He hammered the metal {long/tubular}.
- (4) *The puddle froze {slippery/dangerous}.

(based on Broccias 2003: 156-158)

Flat and *smooth* in (3a) describe the state of the metal surface, and the example in (3a) is acceptable. However, since *long* and *tubular* in (3b) only refer to a property of the metal as a whole, they cannot be used as result APs. The same holds for the example in (4). Since a part of the frozen puddle cannot be described as slippery or dangerous, these examples are unacceptable. Therefore, adjectives denoting properties of parts of an affected NP, as in (3a), can appear as result XPs, but adjectives denoting properties of the whole referent of the affected NP, as in (3b) and (4), cannot.

2.2. Problems

There is a problem with the part-whole affectedness generalization proposed by Broccias (2003). The problem is that some result APs do not refer to a property of any part of the literal affected NP. The adjectives *dry* and *thin* in (5) do not necessarily describe the properties of any part of affected NPs.

- (5) a. They drank the pub dry.
 (Rappaport Hovav and Levin 2001: 788)
- b. He cut the meat thin.
 (Washio 1997: 17)

In (5a), the pub is simply a location to drink alcohol, and it does not undergo a change of state of becoming dry. As a result of their drinking in the pub, the container becomes dry. Similarly, in (5b), the meat itself does not become thin. It is a slice of meat that is recognized as being in a state of thinness as a result of cutting the meat. The adjectives in (5) seem to refer to the properties of different entities “as a whole” evoked by the affected NPs: *dry* describes the property of the con-

tainer as a whole, and *thin* describes the property of the whole sliced meat. This conflicts with Broccias' generalization in (2), which focuses on the notion of "part."

3. Cognitive Semantic Approach

3.1. The Possibility of Metonymical Expansion of Affected NPs

For the semantic interpretation of affected NPs in the result subevent, I assume that there are at least two patterns of interpretation, as shown in (6).

- (6) a. An affected NP is used to stand for any part of the entity denoted by the NP.
 b. An affected NP is used to stand for the whole entity related to the entity denoted by the NP.

Based on the assumptions in (6), I propose a cognitive semantic approach to affected NPs in resultative constructions. To achieve this goal, two cognitive notions are necessary: metonymy and reference-point constructions. In what follows, I will explain the basic features of these two notions and the advantages of introducing them.

3.2. Metonymy

Metonymy is a relationship between two entities based on contiguity, where one entity is used to stand for another entity related to it (Kövecses and Radden 1998, Lakoff and Johnson 1980). The typical examples are given in (7).

- (7) a. The kettle is boiling.
 b. She bought Shakespeare.
 c. We need more hands. (Taniguchi 2003: 119)

Actually, *the kettle* in (7a) refers to the water in the kettle rather than the kettle itself, and *Shakespeare* in (7b) refers to the book written by the author Shakespeare. Similarly, the word *hands* in (7c) stands for

humans, not only for their hands. Like *the kettle, Shakespeare, and hands* in (7), the linguistic expression functions as a vehicle for understanding another entity related to it.

An example like (7c), which is a metonymical expression based on the part-whole relationship, is called “synecdoche” in Lakoff and Johnson (1980). Taniguchi (2003) accounts for the features of synecdoche based on Yamanashi (1988) and takes synecdoche as a subclass of metonymy.² There are two relationships in synecdoche: the relationship between entities (part-whole relationship) and the relationship between conceptual categories (class-kind relationship), as illustrated in (8) and (9). The examples in (8) and (9) are metonymical expressions in Japanese.

(8) Relationship between entities

- a. *Te o kasu* ‘to give a hand’
- b. *Aka-enpitu* ‘a red pencil’

(9) Relationship between conceptual categories

- a. *Hana-mi* ‘cherry blossom viewing’
- b. *Hito wa pan nomi ni ikiru ni arazu.*

‘Man shall not live by bread alone.’

(Taniguchi 2003: 124)

The word *Te* ‘hand’ in (8a) refers to a human, who has hands as a part of his body, while *aka-enpitu* in (8b) implies that the pencil lead is red. These examples correspond to “the part (hand) stands for the whole (human)” and “the whole (pencil) stands for the part (pencil lead)” respectively. Moreover, *hana* ‘flower’ in (9a) refers to the cherry blossom as a kind of flower, while *pan* ‘bread’ in (9b) refers to food in general. The example in (9a) corresponds to “the whole (flower) stands for the part (cherry blossom)” and the one in (9b) to “the part (bread) stands for the whole (food)”. Thus, there are two patterns, “the part for the whole” and “the whole for the part” in synecdoche, which involves both contiguity and subsumption.

3.3. Reference-Point Constructions

Reference-point construction is a mental operation in which the conceptualizer (C) uses one conceived entity in order to establish mental contact with another (Langacker 1993). One conceived entity serves as the reference point (R), and the mentally accessed entity as the target (T). The dominion (D) is the conceptual region that the conceptualizer can access through the reference point. This reference-point ability is one of our basic cognitive abilities. Figure 1 shows the basic structure of a reference-point construction, and the dashed arrows indicate the mental path of the conceptualizer. The reference point, which is a heavy-line circle in Figure 1, functions as an entity more accessible than the actual target for the conceptualizer.

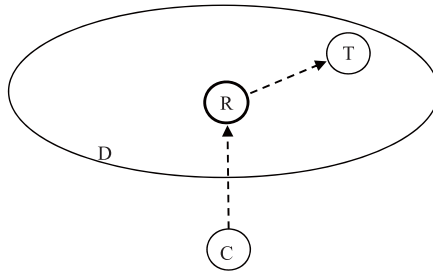


Figure 1. Reference-point construction (Langacker 1993: 6)

According to Langacker (1993), metonymy is one of the linguistic phenomena which reflect the reference-point construction. The sentences in (10) imply the discrepancy between the profiled entity and the actual referent.

- (10) a. I'm in the phone book.
 b. My pencil broke.
 c. The herniated disk in 304 needs a sleeping pill.
 d. That car doesn't know where he's going. (Langacker 1993)

In (10a), what is actually in the phone book is not the speaker but the

speaker's name. *Pencil* in (10b) actually refers to the lead point, and hence, the whole stands for the part. The sentence in (10c) represents a situation in which one nurse mentions an individual patient to another nurse in a hospital. The health problem *herniated disk* is used to stand for the patient. Furthermore, *that car* in (10d) is visible, but the driver is not visible. In short, the profiled entities (denoted by the expressions *I*, *pencil*, *herniated disk*, and *that car*) are the reference points, and the actual referents (my name, the lead point, the patient, and the driver) are the targets. The reference point is more cognitively salient than the target in the immediate context, and hence, we can indirectly understand the target through the reference point.

3.4. The Relevance of Cognitive Notions and Resultatives

Adopting metonymy and reference-point constructions in the analysis of affected NPs in resultative constructions has two important advantages. One is that these notions allow us to capture what entity a result AP is actually predicated of. In this predication relation, a result XP is predicated of a NP in object position, whether this postverbal NP is an argument of the main verb or not. This generalization is called the Direct Object Restriction (DOR). However, even if the result XP is predicated of an affected NP in the syntax, the XP does not necessarily describe a property of the NP. It is possible that a result XP (particularly, a result AP) is semantically predicated of parts or another NP evoked metonymically by the affected NP.

The other advantage is that we find what weak, strong, and spurious resultatives have in common; namely, they allow us to get mental access to parts of a given affected NP or to another NP through it. The sentence *He cut the meat thin*, which is an instance of spurious resultatives, is not considered as a “true” resultative in Washio (1997). However, our understanding of the result state of the meat points to the discrepancy between the object NP and the actual subject of the result XP. Two cognitive notions are required to explain this semantic

discrepancy (i.e., the meat before the cutting and a slice of meat after the cutting), and thus, spurious resultatives are indeed resultatives.

4. Analysis of Affected NPs in English Resultatives

In this section, I will discuss the possibilities of metonymical expansion of affected NPs in resultative constructions by using metonymy and reference-point constructions. The method of my analysis is as follows. First, I divide resultative sentences of the form “NP V NP AP” into two types: subcategorized NP and non-subcategorized NP resultatives. Second, I will judge the presence of the discrepancy between the literal NP and the actual referent using corpus data, dictionary-based meanings of words, and the judgments of my informant. Through this analysis, I present the difference in the semantic interpretation between the two types of resultatives.

4.1. Subcategorized NP Resultatives

Subcategorized NP resultatives are expressions that remain grammatical even in the absence of a result AP (e.g., *John hammered the metal flat/John hammered the metal*). This subsection aims to show that the meanings of affected NPs in such resultatives are expanded on the basis of the part-whole relationship and the result APs describe the properties of the actual referents. The example in (11) is a weak resultative, where the whole object can be used to stand for its part.

- (11) I clear our breakfast and wipe the table clean with a wet rag.
(COCA)

The object *the table* is the entity that receives the action described by a verb. The resultative in (11) represents the event of the subject’s wiping the table and the event of the table’s becoming clean. However, *the table* basically consists of the flat top and the legs, and not all parts of the table are likely to be wiped. Only part of the table (usually, the table top) is affected, and as a result, the table top becomes clean.

This fact is evident in the context of (11): foods are necessarily put on the table top when someone eats breakfast at the table. Thus, we can get mental access to the table top through *the table*. Since the table top depends on the physical entity *the table*, we can recognize the metonymy in which “the table (whole) stands for the table top (part)” and *clean* can describe the property of this part of the table.

Similarly, the affected NPs in (12) can also be used to stand for their parts. The sentences in (12) are also weak resultatives.

- (12) a. Jack painted the house red. (Boas 2003: 152)
 b. He sharpened the pencil pointy. (Washio 1997: 39)

In (12a), Jack paints only one part of the house (i.e., the outside), and the adjective *red* describes the color of the outside of the house. *The house* is used to refer to its outside, which is not an autonomous entity. In (12b), he sharpens only the lead, and as a result, the lead becomes pointy. *The pencil* as a reference point evokes the pencil lead as the actual referent, whose property is described by *pointy*. Both examples in (12) involve metonymy based on part-whole relationships: “the house (whole) stands for the outside (part)” and “the pencil (whole) stands for the lead (part).” Thus, affected NPs like *the house* and *the pencil* function as reference points and can be used to stand for their respective parts. Therefore, *red* and *pointy* can be regarded as referring to properties of these parts of affected NPs.

Next, let us consider some examples of strong resultatives. The affected NPs in (13) seem to involve the part-whole relationship.

- (13) a. John hammered the metal flat. (Wechsler 2001: 3)
 b. He tore the envelope open and pulled out the piece of paper inside. (COCA)

The sentence in (13a) means that the metal became flat as a result of John’s hammering it. More specifically, the metal surface receives the action of hammering, and *flat* describes the state of the surface. Ac-

According to the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (OALD), the noun *surface* means the outside or top layer of something. Given this definition, the metal surface cannot be an autonomous entity since it implies the outside of the metal as a whole. We can indirectly understand the metal surface through *the metal*, and consequently, the metonymical relationship “the metal (whole) stands for the surface (part)” occurs in (13a). The same holds for the sentence in (13b). It means that the envelope was open as a result of his tearing it. More specifically, it is the envelope flap that receives the action of tearing, and *open* refers to the resulting state of the envelope. That is, the envelope flap is not fastened, according to the following definition by the OALD: the adjective *open* means “not fastened or covered, so that things can easily come out or be put in.” Since the spatial concept “opening” in (13b) presupposes the existence of the envelope, it is not an autonomous entity. *The envelope* serves as a reference point and evokes the part *the flap*. Therefore, the example in (13b) involves a metonymy based on the part-whole relationship: “the envelope (whole) stands for the flap (part).”

Furthermore, metonymies based on part-whole relationships also occur in spurious resultatives. The resultatives in (14) include both “the whole stands for the part” and “the part stands for the whole” as metonymical patterns.

- (14) a. Mary braided her hair tight.
 b. Mary sliced the bread thin.
 c. Mary piled the cushions high. (Levinson 2010: 137)

The sentences in (14a) and (14b) are based on the pattern “the whole stands for the part.” In (14a), as a result of Mary’s braiding her hair, the braided hair is actually in a tight state, while in (14b), as a result of Mary’s slicing the bread, a slice of bread is in a thin state. In contrast, the sentence in (14c) is based on the pattern “the part stands for the whole.” It does not mean that the individual cushions become high as

a result of Mary's piling them: the piled set of cushions is regarded as being high. The implicit NPs such as *a braid*, *a slice*, and *a set* can be accessed mentally through the literal NPs such as *her hair*, *the bread*, and *the cushions*. The braided hair, the slice of bread, and the piled set are conceptual entities not mentioned directly and consisting of the concept "whole" respectively; thus, *tight*, *thin*, and *high* refer to the properties of entities as a whole obtained through metonymical expansion. However, the literal NPs and the implicit NPs in (14) are not considered as entities independently of each other in resultative constructions. In the case of (14b), *bread* as a loaf differs from *a slice of bread*, which is a count noun, but they cannot exist simultaneously in the serial process *slice the bread thin*. This is because a slice of bread is created after slicing the bread; this point is also explained in Iwata (2006). Therefore, an affected NP as a reference point evokes another entity related to it, and the metonymy "the whole stands for the part" or "the part stands for the whole" is detected.

It follows from these observations that in subcategorized NP resultatives, affected NPs are metonymically expanded on the basis of the part-whole relationship. The actual referent depends on the affected NP, and the result AP describes the property of the actual referent. We can gain mental access to the part through the whole, or mental access to the whole through the part. The relationship between literal and metonymical entities is limited to the part-whole relationship.

4.2. Non-subcategorized NP Resultatives

The defining feature of non-subcategorized NP resultatives is that the grammatical expression is not maintained when the result AP is deleted (e.g., *They drank the pub dry*/**They drank the pub*). This type corresponds to strong resultatives, and they have either a reflexive pronoun or a fake object as a direct object. The aim here is to demonstrate that the meaning of an affected NP can be expanded to a different entity related to the NP and the result AP can refer to the prop-

erty of the “whole” actual referent, through the analysis of *They drank the pub dry*.

What is remarkable in (15) is that *the pub* is a non-subcategorized object of *drink* and the subject of *dry*. *Drink* is an inherently transitive verb, but it also has an intransitive use.

(15) They drank the pub dry.

For (15), Rappaport Hovav and Levin (2001: 789) suggest that the pub is regarded as undergoing a change of state due to the pragmatic link between the verb and the postverbal NP. However, the pub is merely a location to drink at and it cannot undergo the change of state from not being dry to being dry in the real world. In fact, the intended meaning of (15) can be interpreted as follows.³

(16) Intended meaning of (15):

They drank the alcohol which was served at the pub, and as a result, the bottles located in the pub became dry.

The general interpretation of (15) is that alcohol was consumed as a result of drinking it in the pub. Alcohol in the causing subevent is an implicit entity and it is a different entity from the pub. In the case of the result subevent, the affected NP implicitly refers to some containers, like bottles, but not the pub or alcohol. As shown in (17), the replacement of the direct object is not acceptable and the adjective *dry* is not predicated of the pub or alcohol.

(17) a. *They drank alcohol dry.

b. (As a result of drinking alcohol)

*The pub became dry./*Alcohol became dry.

Given the fact that *dry* describes the absence of water or some other liquid inside or on the surface, *dry* refers to the property of some containers in (15). In fact, what is more contiguous to a liquid is a container rather than the pub. Why can we naturally gain access to *alco-*

hol or *the bottles* through the affected NP *the pub*?

In order to get the interpretation that alcohol was consumed in (15), we first need to recognize *alcohol* in (16) as a bounded entity. Ishida (2002) states that the distinction between count and mass nouns is determined on the basis of “boundedness,” that is, whether the referent of a noun is bounded or unbounded. For example, the mass noun *coffee* in *She drinks coffee* represents the liquid as an unbounded entity, while the count noun *a coffee* in *A coffee, please* is recognized as a drink in a bounded container like a cup. This account of count/mass distinctions helps us interpret implicit entities in (15).

In the causing subevent, *the pub* as a reference point evokes alcohol in the bottles, which is a kind of bounded entity. We can naturally recognize the bottles as a target of drinking. However, in the result subevent, empty bottles are more salient than the consumed alcohol. The bottle is not evoked by *the pub* alone but rather by alcohol in the bottle which has already been expanded metonymically through *the pub*. The alcoholic drinks function as the target in the event denoted by *drink*, while they are the reference point in the event denoted by *dry*. This chain-like course of three entities seems to reflect the dynamic aspect of reference-point constructions developed by Langacker (1993, 1999). The entities *the pub*, *alcohol*, and *the bottles* are a kind of focus of attention, each occurring in some context. The metonymical expansion from *the pub* to *the bottles* in *They drank the pub dry* can be captured by the “focus chain” illustrated in Figure 2, adapted from Langacker (1999).

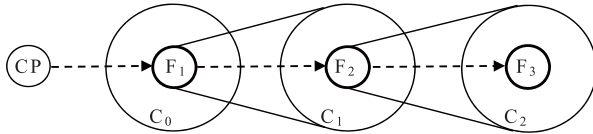


Figure 2. Focus chain of *They drank the pub dry*

A focus chain is a series of successive foci of attention, and each focus evokes a context, in which the next focus can be found. In (15), the affected NP *the pub* (F_1) functions as the initial reference point and evokes the context of the pub (C_1). Within C_1 , *alcohol in the bottles* (F_2) is focused on as an object of drinking and is regarded as the initial target. At the same time, F_2 functions as the next reference point, evoking a new context (C_2), that is, the context of alcohol in the bottles. Finally, *the bottles* (F_3) occur as the final target in the context of “alcohol was consumed,” and the conceptualizer (CP) recognizes F_3 as becoming dry, along the mental path indicated by the dashed arrows. This dynamic aspect allows us to get mental access to *the bottles* as the final target through *the pub* since there is an intermediate entity between *the pub* and *the bottles*. The property of the “whole” bottle can be described by the result AP *dry*. The bottle can be an autonomous entity without *the pub*, and the relationship between the two entities would be based on not only the metonymical patterns “the whole stands for the part” like (9a) but also “the container stands for the content.”

From these observations, we find that affected NPs in non-subcategorized NP resultatives can be expanded metonymically to a different entity related to the NP. The affected NP and the actual referent are autonomous entities from each other, and the property of the “whole” actual referent is described by a result AP. In the next section, I will present the application of the metonymical analysis to the temporal relation in resultative constructions.

5. Constraint on Temporal Relations in Resultative Constructions

Wechsler (2001) presents a model of telicity in English resultatives based on Krifka (1998) and analyzes the homomorphism and coextension between the event denoted by the verb and the property scale denoted by the result XP. “Homomorphism” means that parts of the event must correspond to parts of the property scale, and “coextension” means that the event and the property scale unfold simultane-

ously. Based on these notions, Wechsler shows the following: (i) when the affected theme is an argument of the verb, homomorphism and coextension between the property scale and event are required, and (ii) when the affected theme is *not* an argument of the verb, homomorphism and coextension between the property scale and event are *not* required. However, in the sentence *They drank the pub dry*, which corresponds to case (ii), the event of drinking alcohol and the scale of the bottles' being dry occur simultaneously, violating case (ii). Then, the metonymical analysis of affected NPs in section 4 seems to be useful for capturing the temporal dependence between subevents in resultatives. Based on the analyses in section 4, I propose the constraint on the temporal relation between subevents in resultative constructions in (18).

- (18) When the referent, which a result AP is semantically predicated of, is activated as part of the focus of attention in the causing subevent, the two subevents are temporally dependent.

Under the above constraint, the temporal relation in *They drank the pub dry* is analyzed as follows. In the event of drinking alcohol, the entity *alcohol in the bottles* is a focus of attention and *the bottles* have already been activated at this stage. As the event of drinking alcohol progresses, the volume of alcohol in the bottle is gradually consumed, and *the bottles* serve as the focus of attention in the event denoted by *dry*. Therefore, the two subevents are regarded as being temporally dependent. The same holds for other sentences. The sentence in (11) is temporally dependent because the wiping event and the scale of becoming clean occur simultaneously and *the table top* is shared between subevents. The sentence in (14b) is not temporally dependent because a slice of bread is created after slicing the bread and *a slice* is not the part of the initial focus *the bread* in the preceding event. It is possible to explain the temporal dependence between subevents in resultatives by using the account in (18) based on the metonymical expansion of af-

affected NPs.

6. Conclusion

In this paper, I have discussed the metonymical expansion of affected NPs in resultative constructions on the basis of cognitive notions. The result AP can be semantically predicated of any part of the affected NP or a different entity related to the NP. Although Broccias (2003) emphasizes that result APs refer to the property of any part of an affected entity, we see that some result APs can refer to the property of the “whole” entity. Furthermore, the account of metonymical expansion of affected NPs allows us to reanalyze the temporal relation between subevents in resultatives. In my future research, I will consider further the mechanism of telicity in resultatives.

Notes

1. According to Washio (1997), the distinction between weak and strong resultatives depends on whether it is possible to predict the result state of an affected NP from the meaning of the main verb or not: in the former case, it is possible, but in the latter, it is not.
2. I regard the examples of synecdoche as a subtype of metonymy following Taniguchi (2003), and the term “synecdoche” is not used in my analysis.
3. This interpretation of (16) is based on the judgment of my informant.

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