

Manner conflation in causative constructions: A lexical-syntactic account

In this paper we argue that so-called ‘manner conflation’ (Talmy 2000) is a local process whose semantic interpretation is syntactically determined; in particular, our main goal is to show how our revision of H(ale) & K(eyser)’s (2005) analysis of constructions like (1) naturally leads us to analyze a variety of ‘manner’ constructions from an even more radical syntactically-driven perspective than theirs. Interestingly, H&K (2002, 2005) have shown that the reason whereby an intransitive alternant is possible for (1a), but not for (1b), is related to the different properties of the ‘manner feature’ inherent in the semantics of the roots involved: it is the case that (2a) is grammatical since *splash* involves a manner feature which is ‘linked’ to the internal argument *mud*, while (2b) is ungrammatical since the manner feature associated to *smear* can only be linked externally: crucially, (2b) is ruled out since there is no agent to license such a feature. In other words, the manner feature is patient-oriented in (1a), but agent-oriented in (1b). This said, some important remarks are in order: H&K’s analysis does not appear to capture the relevant fact that *splash* is not locally conflated in (2c) (vs. cf. (2a)). In fact, notice that they posit the same I-syntactic analysis for (1a) and (1b): see (2c)-(d). Our proposal is to analyze the I-syntactic argument structure of *splash* verbs as similar to that of deadjectival verbs on the basis that both typically enter into the causative alternation and both have a patient-oriented root: cf. (3). Indeed, we will take pains to show that there is a crucial difference concerning their formation: while deadjectival verbs are formed via incorporation of A into V (H&K 2002), *splash* verbs involve a syntactic conflation of their root with the inner verb via a ‘plug-in’ device (Mateu & Rigau 2002, McIntyre 2004, and Zubizarreta & Oh in press). [NB: Mateu & Rigau’s (2002) syntactic plug-in operation has been appropriately referred to as ‘welcome invasion’ by Hirschbühler (2006)]. Indeed, as emphasized by these authors, the insertion of the root *splash* and *smear* should not be taken as a trivial process (*contra* H&K’s (2002, 2005) simple analyses in (2)) since the syntactic formation of these complex verbs involves adjunction of a root onto a light verb -a causative one (upper V) or a transitional one (inner V)-. Accordingly, we argue that H&K’s I-syntactic analyses in (2) should be recasted as in (4): the fact that now in (4) conflation is locally represented (e.g., cf. (4c-d) vs. (2c-d)), and the fact that conflation is represented via a syntactic plug-in device contribute to showing a more syntactically transparent semantic interpretation of the manner component.

On the other hand, we show why the parametrized operation of ‘welcome invasion’ (Mateu & Rigau 2002; Zubizarreta & Oh (in press)) involved in these examples allows us to account for Talmy’s (1985, 2000) typological predictions: i.e., Manner verbs (of which those ones in (1) are only a particular case) are more abundant in Germanic than in Romance (Slobin 1996f). We show that examples like (1) (but crucially *not* their Romance counterparts) are in fact complex resultative(like) constructions where the P head is in fact to be decomposed into a complex one, whereby the visible *on* is combined with an abstract *TO*: indeed, we will show the correctness of adopting H&K’s (2002: chap. 7) proposal that terminal coincidence relations are more complex than central coincidence ones (see Svenonius (2006), i.a., for an insightful syntactic recasting of these notions as Path and Place heads). Accordingly, complex resultative constructions like those in (5a) and (5c) can also be analyzed as involving conflation of the ‘welcome invasion’ kind: e.g., like *smear*, *kick* and *push* are agent-oriented roots (H&K 2002, 2005) whereby the I-syntactic analysis in (6) seems to be appropriate (cf. (4b)-(4d)). On the other hand, parallel examples to the *splash* case analyzed above where ‘welcome invasion’ is carried out internally can interestingly be found as well in another lexical semantic area: e.g. cf. causative constructions where the Theme can be said to move in a particular manner. Indeed, we show that our present syntactic analysis of strict local conflation naturally leads us to analyze causative constructions like (7a) from a different, more syntactically-driven perspective than the one adopted by Folli & Harley (2006): while they argue that both (7a) and (7b) have the very same syntactic argument structure where the root $\{\sqrt{\text{RUN}}/\sqrt{\text{WHISTLE}}\}$ is inserted under a causative *v*, their relevant differences being then not syntactically/configurationaly represented, we argue, in contrast, that conflation applies in a more local way whereby the syntactic locus of ‘welcome invasion’ is different in (7a) from (7b): cf. (8a)-(8b). By using syntactic tests like the causative alternation (H&K 2002; but see Harley 1995), we will be arguing for the hypothesis that two verbal heads are syntactically represented for (1a) and (7a), but not for (1b), (5a) or (7b): cf. (3a)/(8a) and (4d)/(6a)/(8b), respectively.

- (1) a. The kids splashed mud on the wall.
 b. The kids smeared mud on the wall. H&K (2002; 2005)
- (2) a. [_V Mud [_V splash [_P on the wall]]] (cf. *Mud splashed on the wall*)
 b. *_V Mud [_V smear [_P on the wall]]] (cf. **Mud smeared on the wall*)
 c. [_V splash [_P mud [_P on the wall]]] (cf. (1a))
 d. [_V smear [_P mud [_P on the wall]]] (cf. (1b))
 NB: The external argument is not present at I-syntax (H&K 1993; 2002)
 H&K (2005: 19-21)
- (3) a. ([_V [_V Ø]) [_V Mud [_V [_V √SPLASH –V] [_P on the wall]]]]
 b. ([_V [_V Ø]) [_V the sky [_V V [_A √CLEAR]]]] (cf. *The strong winds cleared the sky /
 The sky cleared*)
- (4) a. [_V Mud [_V [_V √SPLASH –V] [_P on the wall]]]
 b. *_V Mud [_V [_V √SMEAR –V] [_P on the wall]]]
 c. [_V [_V Ø] [_V mud [_V [_V √SPLASH –V] [_P on the wall]]]]
 d. [_V [_V √SMEAR –V] [_P mud [_P on the wall]]]
- (5) a. The kids kicked the ball into the kitchen.
 b. *The ball kicked into the kitchen.
 c. John pushed the car into the garage.
 d. *The car pushed into the garage.
- (6) a. [_V [_V √KICK –V] [_P the ball [_P to [_P in- the kitchen]]]] (cf. (4d))
 b. *_V The ball [_V [_V √KICK –V] [_P to [_P in- the kitchen]]]] (cf. (4b))
- (7) a. He ran the rats through the maze. (cf. *The rats ran through the maze*)
 b. Mary whistled Rover to her side.
 Folli & Harley (2006)
- (8) a. ([_V [_V Ø]) [_V the rats [_V [_V √RUN –V] [_P through the maze]]]]
 b. [_V [_V √WHISTLE –V] [_P Rover [_P to her side]]]

Selected references

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